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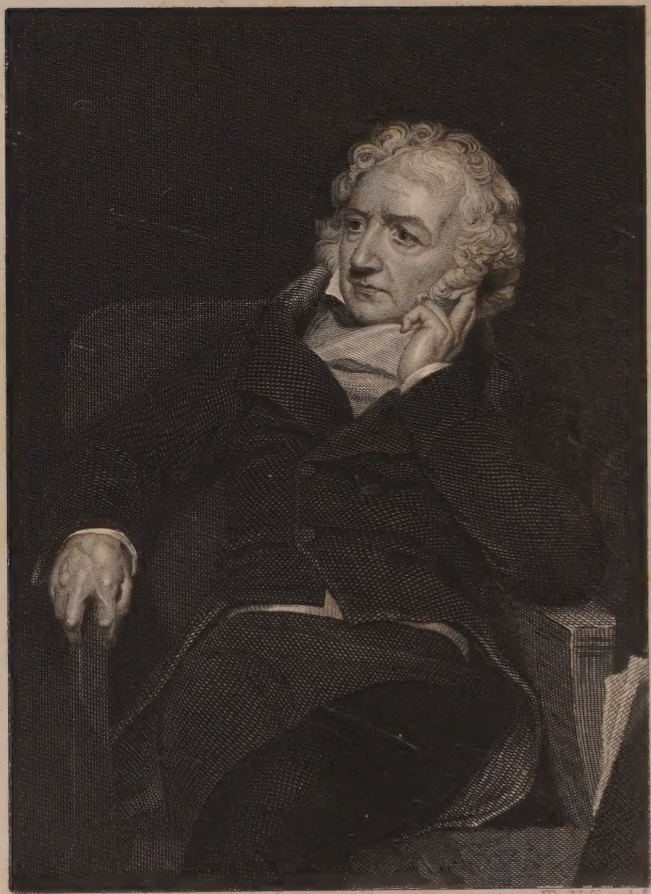

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Fuseli.

LECTURES

ON

PAINTING,

BY THE

ROYAL ACADEMICIANS.

BARRY, OPIE, AND FUSELI.

EDITED,

WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES CRITICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

BY

RALPH N. WORNUM.

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CONTENTS.

Page

INTRODUCTION - - - - - - - 1

THE LECTURES OF JAMES BARRY.

LECTURE I. On the History and Progress of the Art - - 56
II. On Design - - - - - 90
III. On Design (*continued*) - - - - 118
IV. On Composition - - - - - 152
V. On Chiaroscuro - - - - - 176
VI. On Colouring - - - - - 205

THE LECTURES OF JOHN OPIE.

LECTURE I. On Design - - - - - 237
II. On Invention - - - - - 269
III. On Chiaroscuro - - - - - 289
IV. On Colouring - - - - - 313

THE LECTURES OF HENRY FUSELI.

INTRODUCTION - - - - - - - 337
LECTURE I. Ancient Art - - - - - 346
II. Art of the Moderns - - - - 376
III. Invention - - - - - 407
IV. Invention (*continued*) - - - - 435

THE LECTURES OF HENRY FUSELI — (*continued*).

		Page
LECTURE V.	Composition. — Expression - - -	460
VI.	Chiaroscuro - - - - -	477
VII.	On Design - - - - -	490
VIII.	Colour. — Fresco Painting - - -	503
IX.	Colour. — Oil Painting - - - -	515
X.	The Method of fixing a Standard, and defining the Proportions of the Human Frame, with Directions to the Student in copying the Life -	523
XI.	On the prevailing Method of treating the History of Painting, with Observations on the Picture of "The Last Supper," by Leonardo da Vinci -	532
XII.	On the present State of the Art, and the Causes which check its Progress - - -	550

LECTURES

ON

ROYAL ACADEMICIANS.

INTRODUCTION.

Some account of the general rise and progress of European academies of arts will be, perhaps, the most appropriate introduction to a series of academic discourses: to this will be appended slight biographical sketches of the authors, followed by a review of their distinctive characteristics of style, both as regards their subject matter and their mode of expression.

It does not appear that the Greeks or Romans had any public or gratuitous academies* of the arts of design. There was at Sicyon a very celebrated private school, more celebrated, indeed, than perhaps any public school of modern times has ever been.† It was originally established by Eupompus, of Sicyon, about 400 B.C., but acquired its greatest renown under his scholar Pamphilus, of Amphipolis,

* Ἀκαδημία. The term originated in the name of a grove or garden near Athens, which was so named from its founder and possessor Academus: "atque inter Silvas Academi quærere verum. *Hor. Ep.* ii. 2. There was a very celebrated gymnasium in this garden; and it was from this that the academic philosophers acquired their distinctive designation. Academia became, even in the time of the Romans, an established name for a place of study. Cicero called a part of his villa at Tusculum Academia. However, we have here no further business with academies than as institutions of the arts of design, as schools of instruction, or assemblies of honour.

† Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* xxxv. 36.

who succeeded him. The celebrity of this school was so great, that through Pamphilus, says Pliny*, the art of drawing † became established as one of the necessary branches of a liberal education. We know little of the system of Pamphilus, but the course of study, according to Pliny, occupied ten years, and the fee of admission was an Attic talent ‡, a large sum. We may conceive, however, a good idea of its celebrity from the statement of Plutarch §, that Apelles entered it, not on account of what he might learn, but in order merely to obtain the reputation of having studied in the school of Sicyon. The only approximation to a parallel case in modern times is, perhaps, the school of Francesco Squarcione, at Padua, in the earlier half of the fifteenth century. Squarcione was apparently the first private individual who collected a museum of drawings and ancient works of art; and he made it for the express purpose for which the collections of our academies are now made — for the example and instruction of pupils. He owed his collection, which is said to have been the best of its time, entirely to his own exertions; he visited many parts of Greece, and travelled over the whole of Italy, purchasing much, and making drawings of whatever else he thought of value. He was very affluent, and the judicious application of the ability of his scholars tended much to his affluence; they executed many of his commissions. His scholars, at one time, amounted to 137, the largest number of artists, probably, ever brought together by one master: Andrea Mantegna, Marco Zoppo, and Jacopo Bellini were his pupils. ‖

Academies are much older as assemblies of honour than as gratuitous schools of design; but the first institutions of an academic description were entitled societies, and the earliest of them were simple guilds originally assembled from feelings of piety, and they included also decorative artists as well as painters as a part of their body. One of the most ancient of these societies, or guilds, was that of St. Sophia, of Venice (called a School — Scuola), which was established about the middle of the thirteenth century; and both from its date and its title it probably originated with the Greek

* Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* xxxv. 36.
† See Fuseli's first lecture, *note.*
‡ £243 15*s.* according to Hussey: other computations make it less.
§ *Aratus*, 12.
‖ Lanzi, *Storia Pittorica.*

artists who migrated into the West of Europe, after the capture of Constantinople by the Venetians, in the beginning of that century, 1204 A. D. This society, or scuola, which still exists, but not as a society of painters (for these have separated from it), is distinguished from all the other early societies of painters by the name of its patron, St. Sophia; which almost proves its Byzantine origin, as St. Sophia was the patron saint of the metropolitan church of Constantinople; and St. Luke is, perhaps, without exception, the patron of all other similar societies of painters. There are, according to Zanetti *, statutes preserved in its archives, in the Scuola de' Dipintori, of Santa Sofia, of a date as early as 1290, in which still earlier statutes are referred to. The present scuola was built in 1532, from funds bequeathed for the purpose by Vincenzio Catena; and the painters continued members of the society until 1682, when a distinct college of painters, or an academy more according to the modern system, was founded, chiefly through the exertions of Pietro Liberi, who was appointed its first priore, or president. This was, however, still not a school: it was first established as a school by a decree of the Venetian senate in 1724; and, by a similar decree, an academy in 1766. The first distribution of prizes took place in 1774; and in 1782 it received new statutes as the Public Academy of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture — Pubblica Veneta Accademia, &c.: its present title is Reale Accademia delle Belle Arti in Venezia. The collection of pictures in the academy is the largest and finest in Venice, and it possesses also a valuable collection of casts from the antique, and from the works of Canova, and other modern masters. The present academy building is what was formerly the Scuola della Carità, built by Palladio, but some modern additions have been made to it.†

The old corporation of the painters of Siena, "Università de' Dipintori," was probably as old an institution as the "Scuola de' Dipintori" of Venice. Della Valle has printed the statutes of this society of the year 1355 in his *Lettere Sanesi;* but he supposes the society may have been esta-

* *Della Pittura Veneziana*, &c. Venice, 1771.

† *Guida per la Reale Accademia delle Belle Arti in Venezia.* Fiorillo, *Geschichte der Mahlerei*, vol. ii. Göttingen, 1801.

blished a century earlier. St. Luke was its patron; and it was a fine of ten florins for any painter to absent himself from the annual festival on Saint Luke's day, when he was obliged to carry a wax torch in procession. The statute which orders this form and penalty for its omission is dated 1367, and its heading explains the reason of the resolution: it is as follows — "In the name of the Almighty God, and of his blessed mother, the Holy Virgin Mary, and of all the saints of the court of Heaven, and especially of the blessed Luke, the Evangelist, chief and guide of all painters, who painted and drew the image of the Virgin Mary, mother of the Son of God."

The origin of the fable here alluded to is obscure; it existed already in the time of John Damascenus, who lived in the eighth century: there are several pictures of the Virgin and Child still extant in Rome and elsewhere, which are attributed to, and vulgarly believed to have been painted by, St. Luke. D. M. Manni first ventured to show the absurdity of attributing these pictures to the Evangelist.* As he erred, however, in assigning its origin to the confounding with the saint an old Florentine painter of the name of Luca, called Santo, for his piety, his argument was weakened by Tiraboschi, who showed that the tradition was of a much earlier origin than this Florentine painter of the twelfth century. There was, however, a Greek hermit of a much earlier age, of the name of Lucas, who passed his time in painting pictures of the Virgin; and thus the error originated in confounding Luke the Hermit with Luke the Evangelist.†

There was also a society of sculptors (Magistri Lapidum) at Siena, whose statutes were translated into the vulgar tongue as early as 1292: the original statutes may have been framed as early as 1233, and not later than 1270 or 1286, as they were made under a certain government of Siena, which originated in 1233, and ceased at one of the latter dates mentioned. There were sixty-one sculptors at Siena at this time.

A society of painters was also established in Florence in

* *Dell' errore che persiste di attribuirsi le pitture al Santo Evangelista.* Florence, 1766

† See Lanzi, *Storia Pittorica*, &c.

1350, under the title of Compagnia di San Luca; and it existed without alteration until 1561, when an academy was founded, chiefly through the instrumentality of Vasari. Vasari gives a short account of the foundation of this society in the life of Jacopo di Casentino. It was founded, he says, by the artists of Florence — both those who followed the Greek manner, and those who adopted the new manner of Cimabue, in order that they might return thanks to God for the flourishing state of the art at that time, that they might meet together occasionally, and that they might be enabled to afford each other assistance in cases of need. Their first house of prayer was the principal chapel of the hospital of Santa Maria Nuova, given to them by the Portinari family. The original statutes were drawn up, or at least sanctioned, by the following painters: Lapo Gusci, Vanni Cinnuzzi, Corsino Buonaiuti, Pasquino Cenni, Segna d'Antignano, Bernardo Daddi, Jacopo di Casentino, Consiglio Gherardi, and Domenico Pucci. Baldinucci* gives a fuller account of this society. Of the establishment and opening of the academy itself, in 1562, Vasari gives no account, but he has written a long article upon its forty-eight members. It was founded by the Grand Duke Cosmo I., who was also its patron and first president: the first vice-president was Vincenzio Borghini. The present extensive academy building, formerly the hospital of Saint Matthew, lo Spitale di San Matteo, was given to the academy, in 1784, by the Grand Duke Pietro Leopoldo. It contains an excellent collection of casts, and a very valuable gallery of pictures, especially of the earliest Florentine masters, and of their Greek instructors: it possesses also a collection of cartoons of celebrated masters.

Rome also had its ancient Compagnia di San Luca, in which painters and artisans were associated together, and from which arose the now celebrated Accademia di San Luca. The old company possessed a small church of St. Luke upon the Esquiline hill, which was pulled down; and Sixtus V., in 1588, gave them the church of Sañta Martina, near the capitol, in its place, which they dedicated to St. Luke.

Girolamo Muziano was, according to the account of Ba-

* *Notizie de' Professori del Disegno*, &c. Dec. v. sec. 2.

glione, the originator of the academy. He obtained a brief for its foundation from Pope Gregory XIII., but he died in 1590, before the arrangements were complete, and the academy was not finally established until after Federigo Zucchero returned from Spain, in 1595, in the pontificate of Sixtus V. Zucchero was then made president, or principe. The present academy edifice was built adjoining to the church by Urban VIII., after a design by Pietro da Cortona. It possesses a collection of portraits of the academicians, and some valuable pictures.*

Milan also had its old guild of painters; and some time before the year 1499 Leonardo da Vinci had established an academy there for the Duke Lodovico il Moro; it may have been as early as 1485: it was, however, merely a school of instruction, and ceased to exist after some years. The first Milanese academy of the arts, as at present implied by the term, was founded by the Cardinal Federigo Borromeo, in imitation of, and a few years after the foundation of the academy of St. Luke at Rome, about 1609; and he furnished it, at his own cost, with collections of casts and paintings, and, among the latter, many specimens of the Dutch and Flemish schools, hitherto little known in Italy. After a lapse, however, of more than a century and a half, it was found necessary to re-establish the Milanese academy; and accordingly in 1775 a new academy was founded by the Empress Maria Theresa.

No school is more celebrated than the private academy of the Carracci at Bologna; and although Lodovico Carracci endeavoured to procure a papal brief from Clement VIII., in 1599, for the establishment of an academy, on the plan of the academy of St. Luke at Rome, it was not till 1712 that a public academy of the arts was established at Bologna. Count Francesco Ghisiglieri established an academy, in which there was a living model school, in 1686, under the direction of Bolognini, Malvasia, E. Taruffi, and L. Pasinelli; still it did not continue many years. Lodovico Carracci accomplished the separation of the painters from the artisans, with whom they were united in the common guild; and had

* There was a skull preserved in this academy, said to be that of Raphael; but in 1833 the tomb of Raphael, in the Pantheon, was opened, and the skeleton was found entire.

he lived a few years longer, he probably would have accomplished also the establishment of an academy.

Clement XI. granted the brief (*Breve*) for the foundation of the Bolognese academy, whence its name Accademia Clementina*: its actual founder was the General Count Marsigli, and its first meetings were in his palace. It was dedicated to Santa Catarina Bigri; the number of academicians was limited to forty, and Carlo Cignani was its first president. The academy building was originally the Palazzo Poggi, which was purchased by the senate, in 1712, for a National Institute, of which the academy of the arts is a part. It has a good collection of casts, which was presented by Benedict XIV., and a very valuable gallery of pictures, for which it is chiefly indebted to Pius VII. The present Pinacoteca, which contains them, is an addition to the old edifice, by Leandro Marconi, since the peace of 1815, by order of Pius VII.†

The academy of the Carracci was only a private school, and ceased at the death of Lodovico, in 1619; yet it was of such popularity and extent that all other private schools in Bologna suspended their functions of necessity, as they had no pupils. The Carracci called their school L'Accademia de' Desiderosi, the academy of the desirous, chose *contentione perfectus*, by competition perfected, for a motto; and they and their scholars termed themselves gl'Incaminati, or, gl'Incaminati Accademici, which means, literally, the *started*, or the pioneers; in this case, to excellence.

An academy of the arts was founded at Perugia in 1573, of which Orazio di Paris Alfani was the first director; and it exists at present. There are also now academies in most of the principal cities of Italy; but as assemblies of honour, except perhaps those of Naples, Turin, and Genoa, they can scarcely be considered by others than the inhabitants of their respective localities, that is, as many as may be constituted as such by the principles of their foundation. There are academies at Padua, Ferrara, Parma, Mantua, Modena, Vicenza, Verona, Bassano, and recently at Carrara; all, except the last, established in the eighteenth century.

* Zanotti, *Storia del Accademia Clementina di Bologna.* Bologna, 1739.

† Giordani, *Pinacoteca della Pontificia Accademia di Belle Arti in Bologna.* Bologna, 1835.

The academies of France are also numerous. Paris had its privileged company of St. Luke as early as 1390 or 1391, in which painters, sculptors, and various kinds of artisans were associated together. But as of such an ill-assorted body the painters and sculptors formed but a small minority, their position was anything but agreeable to them. Accordingly, the principal painters and sculptors of Paris endeavoured, in the time of Louis XIII., to establish a distinct society, which they accomplished in 1640, under the title of "Communauté des Maîtres de l'Art de Peinture, Sculpture, et Gravure, de la Ville et Fauxbourgs de Paris;" and in 1648 it was constituted, by Louis XIV., a royal academy of painting and sculpture, Le Brun being its first president. It at first had no fixed place of meeting; but in 1656 some apartments in the Louvre were allotted to it, which were shortly afterwards exchanged for some apartments in the Palais Royal, where it continued to meet many years; but finally it received "Le vieux Louvre," with a pension of four thousand francs per annum. The members of this academy commenced in 1673 a public triennial exhibition of their works, which continued, with occasional interruptions, for many years. They were stopped in 1793, when the academy was suspended by the National Convention, and a universal "Commune des Arts" was decreed in its place, which was, however, in its turn superseded by a "Societé Populaire et Républicaine des Arts;" and the academy was re-established by Napoleon, as a part of the Institute of France, in 1806.*

Louis XIV. was also, by the advice of Colbert, the founder of the French Academy of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture at Rome, upon a plan furnished by Le Brun. C. Errard was nominated the first director in 1665, and he set out the year following for Rome, with twelve pupils. The pupils of this academy are all pensioners of the French government. The acquisition of the present spacious edifice, formerly the Villa Medici, was made by the French republic during the consulate of Napoleon, by the advice of M. Suvée, the then director. The academy possesses a very extensive collection of casts.

* Felibien, *Entretiens sur les Vies et sur les Ouvrages des plus excellens Peintres*, &c.; *Organization et Reglements de l'Institut des Sciences, Lettres, et Arts.* Paris, 1807.

The newly-established Royal Academy proved such a formidable rival to the old Society of St. Luke, that the latter, after a gradual decline, was completely dissolved in 1776, and the Royal Academy had the littleness to strike a medal in derision of its downfall, with the motto, "Liberté rendue aux Arts." Various artists, to the number of eighty, members of the old society, and others, not members of the academy, having no place for the public exhibition of their works, endeavoured, in the same year that the old society was dissolved, to establish a new society of painters, in opposition to the exclusive Royal Academy; but their success, whether from a want of unity or zeal, did not extend beyond the accomplishment of a single exhibition, in 1776. The establishment of the Royal Academy of London, which also originated in the dissatisfaction of certain artists with the incorporated society of artists of that time, involved a similar result, — the complete dissolution of the incorporated society was the consequence. Such is the fate of the rivals of royal favourites.

France had many provincial academies; some exclusively of the arts, others of the arts in connection with the sciences and literature, — Académie des Sciences, Belles Lettres, et Beaux Arts; but few of them survived the storms of the revolution, and they showed but little activity in their best days. They were all immediately connected with the central institution of Paris. Louis XIV. established an academy of painting, sculpture, and architecture in Bordeaux, in 1676, but it did not long endure. Similar academies were established by Louis XV. at Toulouse, Marseilles, and many other large towns in France; but few, if any, of those institutions exist at present. Many, however, have been replaced by new establishments.

The Royal Academy of St. Ferdinand, at Madrid, "Real Academia de San Fernando," was established by Ferdinand VI., in 1752. The painters of Madrid had, more than a century before, associated themselves together, with the view of forming an academy, and in 1619 they petitioned Philip III. to that effect, but without success. Several subsequent efforts, during different reigns, were made, with more or less encouragement. Philip V. had expressed his wish that an academy should be established; but its actual

establishment was reserved for Ferdinand VI., and the institution was named after that king. From the year 1758 the academy maintained six pensioners at Rome, — two painters, two sculptors, and two architects, who lived where, and studied as, they pleased, subject only to the surveillance of a director with regard to their mode of life. The academy possesses extensive and valuable collections of paintings and of casts.

In 1768 the Royal Academy of San Carlos was established at Valencia, by Charles III., on a plan similar to that of St. Ferdinand, at Madrid, with which it was connected. The king also presented it with a collection of casts. The academy was first established in 1753, by the brothers Josef and Ignacio Vergára, under the title of "Academia de Santa Barbara;" which name, as we have seen, was fifteen years afterwards changed for that of San Carlos, when it received the royal sanction of Charles III.

Zaragoza also has its Royal Academy, "Real Academia de San Luis," for which it is indebted chiefly to the sculptor, Juan Ramirez. Though the last that was established in Spain, says Cean Bermudez*, it was the first to exercise its public functions. It commenced by an academy established in the house of Ramirez, in 1714, where it continued until his death, in 1740. In 1752, Don Vicente Pignatelli gave it some apartments in his house. In 1778 it was opened in the house of the Conde de Fuentes, still without the royal patronage; but finally, after some other vicissitudes, it was permanently established as the Royal Academy of St. Lewis, in 1792, in one of the royal buildings of Zaragoza. It possesses a good collection of casts, and other works of art. An academy was established at Barcelona in 1788.

Besides these academies, there are institutes of the arts, or schools of design, in nearly all the provincial capitals in Spain; and there is now an academy at Seville. A company of painters, called the company of St. Luke, was established at Seville, by Ferdinand of Aragon.

In Germany† there are upwards of thirty academies, or public schools of design, some of which have arisen out of

* *Diccionario Historico de los mas Ilustres Profesores de las Bellas Artes en España.* Madrid, 1800. † Fiorillo, *Geschichte der Mahlerei*, vol. ix

the shades of older institutions. Augsburg is said to have had its guild of painters, with St. Luke for its patron, as early as the thirteenth century. The oldest German academy of the arts is that of Nürnberg, which was established in 1662. Joachim Nützel, a magistrate, was its first president, and Sandrart and Elias von Gödeler were its first directors.

The Academy "Kunstakademie" of Augsburg, which arose out of the old guild of painters, was first established in 1712, but it does not appear to have had sufficient stamina to preserve its own existence, for in 1779 a new academy was established, of which J. E. Nilson was the director. In the year following, an institution, or school of design, for the improvement of manufactures, was connected with the academy, by a private society, for the encouragement of the arts, "Privatgesellschaft zu ermunterung der Künste." The object of this school was to instruct youths and grown-up persons occupied in mechanical trades and in manufactories, in the principles of ornamental design, for the improvement of patterns of all descriptions. It was, in fact, a school, in intent and purpose, exactly similar to the schools recently, and sixty years later, established by the British government at Somerset House, and in various provincial towns. Meusel * has given an abstract of the regulations and objects of this school. The founders, or prime movers, of both institutions were the Chief Justice Paul von Stetten, junior, and the Burgomaster von Karl zu Mühlbach.

The Royal Academy of Munich, "Akademie der bildenden Künste," was established by Maximilian Joseph I., in 1808. It had existed as a public school of design from the year 1770, and was established by three artists, — the painter Christian Wink, the sculptor Roman Boos, and the stuccoer F. X. Feichtmayr. Peter von Langer, director of the previous drawing school, "Zeichenschule," was also first director of the new academy. His son, Robert von Langer, was the first professor of painting, and Conrad Eberhard was the first professor of sculpture. It possesses a good collection of casts, among which may be mentioned the so-called Achilles of Monte Cavallo, the celebrated gates of Lorenzo Ghiberti, the apostles of Peter Vischer, and the

* *Miscellaneen Artischen Inhalts*, No. xi. p. 815.

Phigaleian and Elgin marbles. It has also a number of *lay-figures* for the study of draperies: they are also of great assistance to the student in testing his compositions in attitudes, in groups, and in the juxtaposition of colours in draperies.

The Royal Academy of the Arts of Berlin was established in 1699, by Frederic I., under the direction of Andreas Schlüters, upon the principle of the academies of Rome and Paris, which are assemblies of honour as well as schools. Its founder, however, died in 1713; and from the purely military taste of his successor, Frederic William I., the academy was soon very little short of being dead too. This king not only suspended the annual grant bestowed upon the academy by Frederic I., but even demanded a rent for the apartments given to it by that king. This demand, however, he did not persist in. In 1743, the third year of Frederic the Great, the academy building, with all its contents, was destroyed by fire. In 1745 it was placed in a new building, which was also partly occupied by the Academy of Sciences, but it was totally without apparatus; and the academy continued in this neglected and very inefficient state until 1786, when the Baron von Heinitz was made curator, a few months before the death of Frederick the Great.

Baron Heinitz procured the academy a new apparatus of drawings, casts, books, &c., and reformed its statutes; and from that time to the present it has steadily progressed in reputation and in efficiency. The present Akademie-Gebäude was enlarged in 1835, and belongs in part to the Academy of Sciences. The distinguished and venerable sculptor, J. G. Schadow, is still (1847) director of this academy. Provincial schools of design, "Kunstschulen," have been established at Halle, Königsberg, Breslau, Magdeburg, Dantzig, and other places; and the academy sends pensioners to Rome.

An academy was established at Düsseldorf, in 1767, by the Elector Carl Theodor, and was located in the building erected by the Elector Johann Wilhelm for a picture-gallery, in 1710. Its first director was J. L. Krahe; the present director is F. W. von Schadow, the son of the director of the academy of Berlin.

There is no academy at Frankfort; but the place of one is admirably supplied by the Städel Institution of the Arts, "Städel'sche Kunstinstitut," which is an academy, and an excellent one in everything but the name, except that it is not an assembly of honour.

This institution was opened in 1828. Its first director was Philip Veit, who resigned his office in 1843, and the present director is Johann D. Passavant, the author of the well-known work *Rafael von Urbino und sein Vater Giovanni Santi.* Leipzig, 1839. The institution was founded by a banker of Frankfort, Johann Friedrich Städel, who, in 1815, bequeathed, for the purpose, his extensive and valuable collection of works of art, and a million florins to maintain it, and constantly extend its sphere of usefulness; and, though the foundation of a private individual, it is both national gallery, or museum, and academy, and yields but little in either respect to the most celebrated kingly institutions of the kind in Europe, even though fostered by generations of kings. The collection at Städel's death, in 1818, consisted of 5000 original drawings; 375 oil paintings of the German, Dutch, Flemish, French, and Italian schools; 22,000 engravings; a collection of casts and bronzes; carvings in wood and ivory; and a choice library on the arts. It is continually being added to, and possesses already some of the finest works of the modern German school of painting.*

The Academy of Painting of Vienna was founded by Joseph I., in 1705, and its first president was the Baron von Strudel. It was improved by Charles VI., in 1726; but was first created an academy of the arts of design by the Empress Maria Theresa, who united various institutions into one, under the title "Akademie der bildenden Künste." The present Imperial and Royal Academy, however, was established by Francis II., in 1800, when new statutes were drawn up for it. Fiorillo has inserted a copy of them in his *Geschichte der zeichnenden Künste in Deutschland und den vereinigten Neiderlanden.*† The official head of this academy is entitled Curator, and the office cannot be held

* Stark, *Das Städelsche Kunstinstitut in Frankfurt am Main,* Frank. 1819; Füssli, *Kunstwerke am Rhein,* Zürich, 1843.

† *Geschichte der Mahlerei,* vol. ix.

by an artist, but must be filled by some minister or high officer of state; nor can, apparently, from the statute, the Präses, or president, be an artist, but must be chosen by the council, which again need not necessarily be all artists, from amateurs of the arts, and men skilled in business, — die künste liebende und in der Geschäftsleitung erfahrene männer Such regulations in a free country cannot but appear derogatory, though in Austria they may not be so considered; yet it appears to amount to an official avowal that artists are incapable of presiding at their own councils.

The academy of Dresden was established by Augustus II., king of Poland, in 1705. In 1775 an academy was established by the Landgraf Frederic II., at Cassel. Several academies which were established by the minor princes in Germany in places utterly inadequate to the support of such institutions, from the want not only of funds, but even of masters and scholars, have long ceased to exist.

The following are the principal Dutch and Flemish academies, most of which arose out of incorporated societies of artists, which also had originated in the still earlier guilds of St. Luke, — "Sankt Lukas gilde." The painters and sculptors of Amsterdam were incorporated into a "Broederschap der Schilderkonst," in 1654, by which an academy was established, under the name of "Teken Akademie te Amsterdam." An incorporated society of artists was established at the Hague, in 1656, "Haegsche Kunstschilders-Broederschap," and an academy in 1682. An academy was established at Antwerp, in 1510, which was exalted into a royal academy in 1663, by Philip IV. of Spain. The painters' guild of Antwerp was of very early date; John Van Eyck was a member of it. An academy was established at Bruges in 1720, and another at Brussels in 1770; there is also one at Ghent. Academies were established at Stockholm in 1733, Copenhagen in 1754, and St. Petersburg in 1765, by Catherine II., which is remarkable for its comprehensiveness: the empress endowed it with a considerable revenue.

Of the establishment of academies of the arts in Great Britain, we may speak somewhat more at length.

The earliest institution of a public character, a part of the plan of which was instruction in the arts of design, was the Museum Minervæ, established by Charles I., in 1635, the

eleventh year of his reign, in the house of its first regent, Sir Francis Kingston, in Covent Garden. Walpole gives a slight account of it in the *Anecdotes of Painting*, in the notice of Sir Balthazar Gerbier. The patent of its erection is still extant in the office of the Rolls; and the rules, orders, and plan of the establishment, were printed in 1636, to which is prefixed a coat of arms granted to the regent and professors of the academy, in 1635. It gave instruction in the arts, sciences, and languages; in fortification, and even in riding: but none except such as could prove themselves to be gentlemen (that is in position) were admitted to study in it; in imitation, probably, of the exclusive law in force among the ancient Greeks, after the time of Pamphilus, of Amphipolis, who established the famous school of Sicyon, which was, that none but the free born, or what is equivalent to it, the noble, should be allowed to practise the arts of design in Greece. As might be expected, the Museum Minervæ did not survive the revolution. Previous to its establishment, says Walpole, a committee had been appointed in the House of Lords, of which the Duke of Buckingham was a member, for taking into consideration the state of the public schools, and method of education. What progress it made is not known; but the Museum Minervæ, *for gentlemen*, was probably a part of its fruits; and with such a specimen of its liberality in the education of the public, we have no occasion to regret the suspension of the functions of this committee.

Sir Balthazar Gerbier established an academy of his own, in 1648, upon similar principles, at Bethnal Green, which he called "The Academy for Foreign Languages and all Noble Sciences and Exercises."

Walpole mentions, also, an Academy of Painters, of which Sir Godfrey Kneller was the head, and at which Vertue, the engraver, studied in 1711.

In 1724 another academy was opened in Covent Garden, by Sir James Thornhill, which, however, did not rise above the rank of a private establishment. Sir James had before attempted, through Lord Halifax, to obtain the foundation of a royal academy of painting, &c., but in vain. He had even designed a plan, and made an estimate of the expenses of a building suited for the purpose, and containing also

apartments for the professors. His estimate amounted to 3139*l.*

In the year 1758 the Duke of Richmond opened a gallery of casts from the antique, in Whitehall, forming an academy, or gratuitous school of design for young artists, and he established premiums for the best design. This school was under the management of Cipriani for drawing, and Wilton for sculpture or modelling; but, like its predecessors, its existence was of short duration, and its ultimate effect was in proportion, though probably to many young artists individually it was of considerable benefit. An advertisement notifying the opening of this gallery "for the use of those who study painting, sculpture, and engraving," appeared in the Chronicle of February 25th, 1758. Youths under the age of twelve were not admitted — a proper restriction; but the age of fifteen would perhaps have been better, for to the practice of schooling children into the professional use of the pencil, when they are scarcely strong enough to hold it firmly — to teach them to draw sometimes before they have well learnt to read — may be attributed the too frequent general incapacity of the mature artist in after-life. Shortly, however, after the opening of this gallery an impudent placard, pasted upon the door, forced the duke to close it again. The cause of the placard was the duke's omitting to award the promised premiums. It was the time of the third Silesian or seven years' war, and he was called away suddenly to join his regiment on the continent, and in his absence the premiums were not given. When he returned, he found a sarcastic placard, in his own name, upon the door of his gallery, apologising for his poverty, and expressing his sorrow for having promised rewards which he could not pay. He immediately closed the gallery: he, however, opened it again after a little time, and placed it under the superintendence of the newly-incorporated society of artists, at the request of that society; but it was gradually less frequently attended, until it was finally wholly superseded by the foundation of the Royal Academy in 1768. It remained open, however, some years after that event; for those who chose to attend it, and amongst these was Edwards, the author of the "*Anecdotes of Painting*," in continuation to Walpole's compilation from the collections of Vertue.

Edwards speaks of a "Life School," or living model academy, which was established in the house of a painter of the name of Peter Hyde, in Greyhound Court, Arundel Street, under the direction of Mr. Moser, afterwards the first keeper of the Royal Academy. In about the year 1739, it was removed to a more commodious house in Peter's Court, St. Martin's Lane, where it continued until 1767, when it was removed to Pall Mall. Hogarth is said to have studied in this school. In 1753 the artists connected with it — they constituted the great body of the artists of the metropolis — called a general meeting, for the purpose of establishing an academy, by a printed circular, of which the following is a copy: —

"Academy of Painting, Sculpture, &c., in St. Martin's Lane, Tuesday, Oct. 23. 1753.

'There is a scheme set on foot for erecting a public academy for the improvement of the arts of painting, sculpture, and architecture; and as it is thought necessary to have a certain number of professors, with proper authority, in order to the making regulations, taking in subscriptions, erecting a building, instructing the students, and concerting all such measures as shall be afterwards thought necessary, your company is desired at the Turk's Head, in Greek Street, Soho, on Thursday, the 13th of November, at five in the evening precisely, to proceed to the election of thirteen painters, three sculptors, one chaser, two engravers, and two architects — in all twenty-four — for the purposes aforesaid.

"Francis Milner Newton,
"Secretary.

"P. S. — Please to bring the enclosed list, marked with a cross before the names, of thirteen painters, three sculptors, one chaser, two engravers, and two architects, as shall appear to you the most able artists in their several professions, and in all other respects the most proper for conducting this design. If you cannot attend, it is expected that you will send your list, sealed and enclosed in a cover, directed to me at the Turk's head, in Greek Street, Soho, and that you will write your name on the cover, without which no regard will be paid to it. The list, in that case, will be immediately taken out of the cover, and mixed with the other lists, so that it

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shall not be known from whom it came; all imaginable methods being concerted for carrying on this election without any favour or partiality.

"If you know of any artist of sufficient merit to be elected as a professor, and who has been overlooked in drawing out the enclosed list, be pleased to write his name, according to his place in the alphabet, with a cross before it."

Here we have a complete scheme of an academy of the arts, and drawn up with the greatest liberality of intention. Twenty-four was a large numerical proportion of the artists of that time. The effort, however, completely failed in an immediate result, though it was the first of the series of efforts which ended in the foundation of the present Royal Academy. In 1765 the same society of artists succeeded in obtaining a charter as a corporate body, as "The Society of Artists of Great Britain," and St. Luke's day was fixed upon as the day of annual meeting for the election of officers. Mr. Lambert was the first president. The organization of this body, however, was so unsound that it was nearly dissolved by internal factions three years after its establishment. To discover the real fault or faults of its constitution would be a difficult investigation; but its great defect was generally supposed to be its want of a proper limitation of the number of its members. The original founders and official directors of the institution soon became a small minority; and the first acts which gave offence to them were the substitution of Mr. Kirby, as president, in the place of Mr. Hayman, who had succeeded Mr. Lambert; and the removal of the original secretary, Mr. Newton. These acts, and others equally disagreeable to the directors, were the consequence of a special general meeting of the society, convened by seven members, who circulated a printed letter, October 8th, 1768, which has been preserved by Edwards. It was as follows: —

"Sir,

"At the last General Quarterly Meeting of the Society of Artists a law was proposed, and carried by a great majority, to secure the election of eight new directors annually. This proposition for a law, being referred to the directors, has since been returned with their absolute refusal, notwithstanding the Attorney General's opinion, that the society has full

power, by their charter, to make such law, and to which opinion the directors had previously determined to abide; and, as a further aggravation, it must be observed, that the directors were not satisfied with this use of their power, but added to it most reproachful reflections on the fellows of the society.

"This is, therefore, to desire your attendance on Thursday next, at six o'clock, at the Castle Tavern, Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, to meet the rest of the fellows of the society, in order to consider of the proper persons to serve as directors for the year ensuing, whereby it is hoped that such persons will be named who will consider the general interests of the society."

The consequences of this meeting, on the next St. Luke's day, were the changes already mentioned, and the exclusion of many of the original directors. Shortly after these changes, eight other of the original directors resigned their offices, and, with many others, seceded from the society. They gave notice of their resignation in the following letter to Mr. Kirby, the president, dated November 10th of the same year: —

"Sir,

"Though we had the strongest objections to the unwarrantable manner in which most of the present directors of the society were elected, yet our affection for the community was such, that we had, in spite of every motive to the contrary, resolved to keep possession of our directorships. But finding the majority of the present directors bent upon measures which we think repugnant to our charter, and tending to the destruction of the society, we judge it no longer safe to keep possession of our employments; therefore do hereby resign them, that no part of the blame, which will naturally follow the measures now pursuing, may, in any shape, be laid upon us.

"From the motions and insinuations of the last meeting, we clearly see what plan is to be pursued; and we likewise clearly perceive that, however odious and hurtful such a plan may be, we shall find it utterly impossible to prevent it."

Here follows a part which has no reference to the subject as a public question, the writers merely expressing their

personal respect for Mr. Kirby himself, and some other remaining directors of the society. The letter was signed by Joseph Wilton, Edward Penny, Richard Wilson, Benjamin West, William Chambers, G. M. Moser, Paul Sandby, and F. M. Newton.

In this letter much is left to be inferred, but little is stated in justification of the secession. It speaks of the unwarrantable manner in which the majority of the then directors were elected, yet the election must have been constitutional, if valid. It is evident that the institutors of the society discovered, when it was too late, that they had founded a very different society from what they had wished or intended to establish; and it cannot be disguised, that the most material cause of the secession was the loss of supremacy. What followed caused a great deal of animosity among those who continued with the society, and led the whole proceeding of the seceders to be termed afterwards a base intrigue; and, in evidence before the select committee of the House of Commons, in 1836, the credit of it was given to Sir Joshua Reynolds; but it will be seen, by some facts which shall be presently stated, that if there were an intrigue, which is not apparent, Sir Joshua Reynolds had, at all events, no hand in it whatever. The case is plainly this: — Certain artists seceded from a society which was not agreeable to them, and they were men of sufficient influence to establish a society under a name, and in a form, which was exactly in accordance with their desires, namely, the Royal Academy, and they accomplished this without the knowledge of those from whom they separated. This their opponents have exaggerated into an intrigue; yet, so far, they certainly did nothing but what was perfectly justifiable, although, in the regulation of the detail of the establishment, they laid themselves open to the charges of harbouring personal animosity, and even of illiberality. The pointed exclusion of engravers from the privileges of the institution was an unprovoked indignity to an entire class of artists, equally as useful and meritorious, as a body, as any other class. Sir Robert Strange, in a pamphlet published in 1775, entitled *An Enquiry into the Rise and Establishment of the Royal Academy*, assigns a reason for the exclusion, if true, highly discreditable to those responsible for its adoption. He says — "The dissension in the

Society of Artists having reached its height, and the remnant of the old directors, whose attempts to obtain an arbitrary and irresponsible power had occasioned the dissension, having, by a vigorous effort on the part of the general body of members, become a minority, now, with the help of Mr. Dalton" (librarian to George III., to whom Strange was particularly obnoxious), "betook themselves to the king, and proposed an enlargement of the plan of the Royal Academy" (alluding to a scheme of Mr. Dalton's of the preceding year), "so that it might only serve their views of triumph over the society from which they had seceded." . . . "In modelling the plan of this academy," he continues, "I had the honour, as I was informed, to be particularly remembered by them. At length, the more effectually to prevent every chance that I might have of partaking the honours they were sharing, it was proposed that nothing less than *a total exclusion of engravers* should take place." . . . "West," continues Sir Robert, "warmly opposed the motion: he entered into the merits of the profession in its various consequences; he showed the advantages which painting reaps from it, as well as the benefits which might result from it to this country as a commercial nation. But his endeavours were to no purpose, and the measure was carried against him."

In this inquiry Sir Robert Strange has put the name of Mr. Dalton more prominently than the facts warrant, which is evident from the testimony of Edwards and Northcote, who do not even mention his name. The following is Northcote's account, in his *Life of Reynolds*, from which it is clear that Sir Joshua had no share in the imputed intrigue by which the foundation of the academy was accomplished: — "The four persons who first planned the institution were Sir William Chambers, Mr. West, Mr. Cotes, and Mr. Moser: these together carried on the project with such profound secrecy, that not one of the incorporated society had the least knowledge or idea of its having been seriously thought of; insomuch, that even Mr. Kirby, their president, had just at that time assured them, from his chair of office, that his majesty intended to patronise them, and also to visit their exhibition. In the mean time the four above-named persons, with the concurrence of some others of their party, proceeded in their plan. They also made out a list of their officers, as

well as of those who were to compose the body, containing about thirty names, and had inserted that of Reynolds amongst the rest. This list was to be delivered to the king, for his approbation and signature; however, Mr. Reynolds was still unwilling to join with either party, which resolution he made known to Sir William Chambers, in consequence of which Mr. Penny was sent to persuade him to join their party; but that proved in vain. Penny then applied to Mr. West, and begged him to intercede with Reynolds, adding that he was the only person who could influence him to consent. Mr. West accordingly called on Mr. Reynolds on the same evening, on which the whole party had a meeting, about thirty in number, at Mr. Wilton's house, expecting the result of Mr. West's negotiation, as the king had appointed the following morning to receive their plan, with the nomination of their officers. Mr. West remained upwards of two hours, endeavouring to persuade Reynolds, and at last prevailed so far, that he ordered his coach, and went with Mr. West to meet the party, and immediately on his entering the room, they, with one voice, hailed him as their president. He seemed to be very much affected by the compliment, and returned them his thanks for the high mark of their approbation; but declined the honour till such time as he had consulted with his friends, Dr. Johnson and Mr. Edmund Burke. This demur greatly disappointed the company, as they were expected to be with the king on the very next morning, by appointment; but Messrs. West and Cotes avoided going to the king next day, as they could not present him with a complete list of their officers, for the want of a president; and it was not till a fortnight after that Reynolds gave his consent, although Mr. West had called on him in the mean time to know his determination, when Reynolds frankly told him that he had been informed, from the very best authority, that their scheme would come to nothing, as it was wholly a delusion. And when Mr. West testified his astonishment at such an idea, Mr. Reynolds freely confessed to him that he had the intelligence from Mr. Kirby himself, who assured him that the king had declared his intention of giving his countenance and protection to the incorporated Society of Artists, and also to visit their annual exhibition; to which Mr. Kirby

added that, in consequence, he had himself declared the same to the society from the president's chair."

This account, which was published in West's life-time, in its unlaboured simplicity, carries the stamp of truth with it, and shows that the prevailing notion that Sir Joshua Reynolds was the prime mover in the foundation of the academy is a decided error. Even Sir M. A. Shee, in his evidence (1916) before the select committee of the House of Commons, in 1836, treats the aspersion upon the motives of the originators of the academy as a calumniation of Sir Joshua's character, though no names were mentioned; and Mr. Haydon, the author of the offensive passage (1056), at his second examination (2183), virtually acknowledges that Sir Joshua Reynolds was alluded to in his accusation; and he affirms, at the same time, that Sir Joshua was a complete intriguer. As the evidence (1056) referred to is an aggregate of the various charges brought against the academy, it may be quoted in this place. "The Royal Academy," says Mr. Haydon, "originated in the basest intrigue: there was a chartered body of artists, out of which, twenty-four directors were annually elected by the constituency; then these directors, having got the sweets of power once, naturally, as all men do, wished to keep it, and they wanted to be elected again: but the feelings of the constituency, who knew right from wrong, refused to consent to it, and sixteen of these directors were voted out. These men had the ear of Dalton, the king's librarian, and they persuaded Dalton to persuade George the Third to found a Royal Academy, which George the Third consented to do, and thus the other eight directors that were left seceded and joined the sixteen, giving themselves a majority of four, because they limited the number to forty in the new academy. All the exclusive laws were thus carried, which the artists complain of, and have been the cause of the whole of the bad passions, intrigue, injustice, cabal, heat, and turmoil in English art, ever since."*

Sir Joshua Reynolds did not even sign the petition to George III. for the formation of the academy, which was drawn up and presented by Mr. (afterwards Sir William) Chambers, yet that memorial bore the signatures of

* Report: Arts and Manufactures, Part II. 1836. *Minutes of Evidence before Select Committee on Arts and Principles of Design.*

twenty-two artists. "Its purport," says Mr. Howard, "was to show the probability that with his majesty's royal sanction and encouragement, and by means of an annual exhibition of their works, they would soon be able to raise sufficient funds for the support of a gratuitous national school of art. The memorial stated, 'The two principal objects which we have in view are the establishing a well-regulated school or academy of design, and an annual exhibition open to all artists of distinguished merit; we apprehending that the profits arising from the last of these institutions will fully answer all the expenses of the first; we even flatter ourselves that they will be more than necessary for that purpose, and that we shall be enabled annually to distribute somewhat in useful charities.' The proposal was graciously received. The plan of a constitution was drawn up by Mr. Chambers, and laid before the king, which he approved, and signed on the 10th of December, 1768. Thus was founded 'The Royal Academy of Arts in London, for the purpose of cultivating and improving the arts of painting, sculpture, and architecture.'" †

The artists who signed this memorial were: Benjamin West, Francesco Zuccarelli, Nathaniel Dance, Richard Wilson, George Michael Moser, Samuel Wale, J. Baptist Cipriani, Jeremiah Meyer, Angelica Kaufmann, Charles Catton, Francesco Bartolozzi, Francis Cotes, Edward Penny, George Barrett, Paul Sandby, Richard Yeo, Mary Moser, Agostino Carlini, William Chambers, Joseph Wilton, Francis Milner Newton, and Francis Hayman.

These, with John Baker, Mason Chamberlin, John Gwynn, Thomas Gainsborough, Dominick Serres, Peter Toms, Nathaniel Hone, Joshua Reynolds, John Richards, Thomas Sandby, George Dance, J. Tyler, William Hoare of Bath, and Johan Zoffani, composed the original thirty-six academicians. The number forty was not completed till 1772, by the addition of Edward Burch, Richard Cosway, Joseph Nollekens, and James Barry. Their first meeting was held on the 14th of December, when the following officers were elected, viz: J. Reynolds, *President;* G. M. Moser, *Keeper;* F. M. Newton, *Secretary;* E. Penny, *Professor of Painting;* T. Sandby, *Professor of Architecture;* S. Wale, *Professor of Perspective;* and Dr. William Hunter, *Professor of*

* *Penny Cyclopædia*; article, *Royal Academy.*

Anatomy. The king appointed William Chambers *Treasurer*, and R. Wilson *Librarian*.

Though this list contains probably the majority of the able artists of that day, and certainly the most vigorous portion of them, still we miss the names of several men of great reputation at the time. For instance: Allan Ramsay, principal painter to the king. Hudson, the portrait painter, Samuel Scott, the marine painter, and Romney, besides others. The proportion of foreigners is also very large; the only two ladies named in the list, Angelica Kaufmann and Mary Moser (afterwards Mrs. Lloyd), were both Swiss. The absence of Romney's name from the list was probably owing to his own reserved habits, for he did not associate with any body of artists. The academy was opened on the first or second of January, in 1769, upon which occasion Sir Joshua Reynolds read his first discourse: as president of the academy he received the honour of knighthood from the king, and all successive presidents have received the same honour, except Benjamin West, who declined it.

To return to the incorporated society. This body, or, more correctly, what was left of it, which, however, still amounted to upwards of a hundred members, was greatly exasperated at the success of the seceders, and it endeavoured to establish a second academy, and the members continued their efforts for several years, without, however, accomplishing their purpose. They had solicited the king's permission, through their president, Mr. Kirby, to establish an academy, which was granted them, the king stating that he did not mean to patronise any particular set of men; that his object was to patronise the arts, and he promised to visit their exhibition. George III. did visit their exhibition of the ensuing year, in Spring Gardens, and presented them with 100*l*., but it was the last visit they had from him.

On the other hand, his adoption of the Royal Academy was immediately followed by the most liberal and effective support.*

The Royal Hibernian Academy of Dublin was founded in 1823; its constitution received the royal signature on the 5th of August of that year. W. Ashfield was elected its

* The reader will find many additional details concerning this period of English Art-History in Mr. Pye's *Patronage of British Art*.

first president. Drawing-schools had been established many years previous to the institution of this academy, by the Dublin Royal Society, instituted in 1731, and incorporated in 1749. Schools of drawing, painting, and architecture were established in 1746, by the Earl of Chesterfield, Lord-Lieutenant; and they were presented with a collection of casts by the Earl of Charlemont. A school of sculpture also was established in 1806. An academy was established in Edinburgh in 1826, which became the Royal Scottish Academy on the 12th of November, 1838. Sir William Allan was elected the first president. A drawing-school for artizans had been established by a board of trustees for the encouragement of manufactures in Scotland as early as 1707; and about 1765 it became also a school for the study of the human figure, under the direction of a Frenchman of the name of De la Croix. It has been long well known as the Trustees' Academy, and has been the nursery of all the most distinguished Scotch artists up to this time: it was Wilkie's first school.* The United States of America have also their academies of the arts,— those of New York and Philadelphia are of some years' standing; the former was founded in 1805, the other in 1807.

Having thus briefly recounted the history of the establishment of Academies, it will not be out of place here to review their constitution and government, but it will be sufficient to notice only a few of the chief European institutions of the kind which have a distinguishing peculiarity of constitution; for the regulations of all are very similar, and the constitutions of the great majority are exact copies of those of the few principal academies. Of these institutions, the old "Università de' Dipintori of Siena," is one of the most remarkable in this respect, and though probably the most ancient of all, was, perhaps, the most arbitrary and exclusive. Family tuition, if apprenticeship may be so called, was the only species of instruction then adopted; but every youth, before he could be admitted into appren-

* The reader will find considerable detail concerning the Irish and Scotch Academies in Mr. W. S. Taylor's *Fine Arts in Great Britain and Ireland.*

ticeship, was obliged to swear always to keep the statutes of the corporation, and to abide by the decision of the rector, who had authority to impose fines in all cases of misdemeanor, and had also the power of expulsion from the community, in which case the expelled could not practice his art in the territory of Siena. These powers were awarded by the State in the Breve, or deed of incorporation, and could not be resisted. No stranger could practise his art in Siena without a special licence from this society: the price of the licence was a gold florin; and it appears to have been valid only for the particular engagement, or at least visit, for which it was granted; but a stranger might be received as a member into the society. The society of sculptors was distinct, but was similarly constituted. All members of these societies were eligible to fill the offices of their Signoria, or government, in rotation. The rector, or rectors, were assisted by a council of thirteen members, three of whom were the rectors' counsellors; and each society had also its treasurer, who was at the same time its secretary. The offices were held, by election, for six months only: it was not allowed to vote for your own relation, or partner, to fill the office of rector; and no member was re-eligible until after an expiration of three years. The officers were paid for their services; the rectors received twenty florins each, and the treasurers fifteen: the society of sculptors had three rectors. All disputes or doubts relating to the estimation of work done or contracted for were settled by the Signory of the society; it appears even, from one part of the statutes, to have regulated the price of all work, and to have levied a tax upon the amount, which, of course, was really paid by the employer or purchaser, as a proper allowance would be made for the tax in the estimation of the work.

The highest fine mentioned in the statutes is forty florins, something less than four pounds; but this in the thirteenth century was a very large amount. For disobedience to the rector, the fine was ten florins; the large fines were provided against a breach of trust of the rectors or treasurers. The following instance will serve to show the value of money at this time:—In 1296 a painter was paid, at Siena, only six lire, about five shillings, for painting a figure, most pro-

bably in distemper, of Saint Christopher, in the court of the Signory house.

The other old companies of Saint Luke were very similarly constituted to this of Siena.

Of the constitutions of academies, which are assemblies of honour as well as gratuitous schools of the arts, that of the Royal Academy of London, which is an imitation of the Academies of Florence, Rome, and Bologna, will serve as a sufficient specimen. Forty, which was the original number of the academicians of Florence, appears to have been the number of limitation adopted by most subsequent academies.

The following account of the Royal Academy of London is from the article already referred to by the late secretary of the academy: —

The Royal Academy consists of forty academicians, painters, sculptors, and architects. There is a second order of members, styled associates, twenty in number, from whom alone the vacancies that occur among the academicians are supplied. The academicians elect, but the approbation and signature of the crown are necessary to make this election valid.

There are also six associate engravers. Associates are elected by the body of academicians, from a list of exhibitors who declare themselves candidates for this honour.

There are a treasurer and a librarian. A bye-law of the Academy requires that they shall be academicians. These offices are filled by the nomination of the crown.

There are also a keeper and a secretary. These offices are filled by election, with the approbation of the crown.

There are four professors, academicians, elected by the general assembly, and approved by the crown, who read lectures on painting, sculpture, architecture, and perspective.

There is a professor of anatomy, elected by the academicians, with the approbation of the crown.

There are three schools: a school for study from casts from celebrated works of antiquity, a school for study from living models; and a painting school. The first is under the care and direction of the keeper; and the other two are under the care of visitors, annually appointed.

The council consists of nine members, including the pre-

sident, and has the management of all the concerns of the Society. All bye-laws of the Academy must originate in the council, and have the approbation of the general assembly, and the sanction of the royal signature to give them effect.

The president, council, and visitors are annually elected, and confirmed by the royal signature.

There are also several honorary members of the Royal Academy, namely, a professor of ancient literature, a professor of ancient history, a chaplain of high rank in the church, an antiquary, and a secretary for foreign correspondence, elected by the general assembly and approved by the crown.

All persons are admissible as students of the Academy. Nothing but indication of talent and a respectable character are required from them. Their names remain unknown till judgment is passed on the specimens which they send in, and when admitted they receive a gratuitous education from the best masters.

All painters, sculptors, or architects, whose works show sufficient merit, are allowed to exhibit with the Academy, and, being admitted exhibitors, they are immediately eligible as associates. Many young artists, whose great abilities have promised to contribute to the credit and support of the institution, have been chosen associates, and soon afterwards academicians, though they had scarcely left the schools.

The executive government of the Academy passes in rotation to all the academicians, and half the council retires, and is renewed annually.*

The operations of the Academy are continued in regular succession throughout the year, excepting vacations of a month in September and a fortnight at Christmas. Unfortunately the necessity of giving up the only room fit for an antique academy to the annual exhibition of sculpture renders the cessation of that school during the exhibition still unavoidable.

The schools of drawing, painting, and modelling are open daily from ten to three, and from six to eight, under the direc-

* A full account of the rules of the Academy will be found in the *Abstract of the Instrument of Institution and Laws of the Royal Academy of Arts in London.* 1797.

tion of the keeper and visitors. A practical course of lectures on perspective is given during the spring. The lectures on anatomy are delivered before the Christmas recess; those on painting, sculpture, and architecture, are given twice a week, from January to the end of March. The library is open three times a week.

Prizes are annually given to encourage meritorious students, and those who have gained the biennial gold medal have from time to time an opportunity of being sent abroad to study for three years at the expense of the Academy. —

To this account may be added some additional information drawn from the minutes of evidence before the select committee of the House of Commons, above alluded to, on the arts and principles of design, in 1836.

The finances of the academy are under the management of four trustees, one of whom is elected; the remaining three are trustees, ex-officio, namely, the president, the secretary, and the treasurer.

All officers of the academy are paid officers, except the auditors and the inspectors of works imported by British artists for their own use: but all the salaries are very moderate.*

* The president has no fixed salary, but has an equal part of forty-five shillings, which are divided at every meeting of the council; at every general meeting, also, in common with all the other members, he is entitled to a fee of five shillings if he attend. A similar custom appears to have prevailed in the old society of sculptors of Siena with regard to the rector and the treasurer; the former received a fee of five pence (ten soldi), the other a fee of two and a half pence (five soldi). From this regulation it appears that a member of the council, if constant in his attendance, can receive only about eight or nine pounds during the course of the year; and an academician, not a member of the council, may receive about fifty shillings during the year. The office of the president, however, will, at the decease of Lady Chantrey, be the first office in point of emolument as well as rank in the Academy, for the president will then have the reversion of 300*l.* per annum, according to the will of the late Sir Francis Chantrey.

The keeper of the Academy has a salary of 100*l.* and apartments in the Academy; the secretary has 140*l.* per annum, besides an allowance for apartments; the treasurer receives 100*l.*, and the librarian 80*l.* per annum. Each of the four professors of painting, sculpture, anatomy, and architecture receives 60*l.* for the delivery of a course, during the year, of six lectures. There is at present no professor of perspective, but a teacher. The visitors of the schools are paid one guinea for every evening attendance of at least two hours.

The professorships of ancient literature and ancient history are merely honorary, and of course there are no salaries attached to them. Dr. Goldsmith was the first professor of ancient history ; and he notices the honour in the following sensible manner, in a letter to his brother, quoted by Northcote, in his *Life of Reynolds* : — "The king has lately been pleased to make me professor of ancient history, in a royal academy of painting, which he has just established, but there is no salary annexed; and I took it rather as a compliment to the institution, than any benefit to myself. Honours to one in my situation are something like ruffles to a man that wants a shirt."*

The exhibition of the Academy is arranged by what is called the "Hanging Committee," from the pictures selected by the council out of all the works sent to the Academy for the purpose of exhibition.†

The election of associates, when there are vacancies to be filled up, takes place after the exhibition has closed. A general meeting of the academicians is held in the exhibition rooms before the collection is dispersed, for the purpose of examining into the respective merits of the various candi-

* The only value of this appointment was to give Goldsmith a dinner once a year, for it entitled him to a place at the annual dinner given by the Academy to the patrons of the arts, which takes place immediately before the opening of the exhibition in the month of May. As this dinner, which costs the Academy about 300*l.* annually, has been an object of attack from the opponents of the institution, a notice of it is perhaps desirable. This dinner, to which are issued 140 invitations, is entirely arranged by the council for the time being : of these invitations many are entitled official, that is, persons holding certain high offices in the church and state are invited, by virtue of their offices, and others from their rank or reputation in society. Whatever vacancies may still remain to make up the number to 140 are filled up by ballot, each member, commencing with the president, proposing an individual, who must be distinguished either for rank, talent, or as a patron of the arts. No member has any power whatever to introduce a friend to this dinner : he may propose a friend, but his admission depends upon the general ballot. In the first category are included the princes of the royal family, the corps diplomatique, the principal ministers of state, men greatly distinguished in the arts of war or peace, and well-known patrons of the arts.

† The Hanging Committee consists of three, four, or even five members, each of whom is allowed two guineas per day for his services. The profits of the exhibition amount to about 5000*l.* per annum.

dates who have registered their names as such; and the election takes place on the first Monday in November. An artist is not eligible until he is twenty-four years of age, nor is he eligible if he belong to any other society of artists.

£20,000 of the funded stock of the academy, 47,000*l.* in 1836, are expressly reserved for the provision of pensions and allowances for superannuated or distressed members.

The Royal Academy of Paris, though formerly very similar to that of London, now differs materially from it in many points; but engravers always have been full members of it. It has no control, as the Academy, over the annual exhibition of the Louvre, which is a government, or rather royal institution, independent of, and distinct from it; the jury, however, for examining the pictures sent for exhibition is generally composed of academicians.

The academy of arts of Paris, "Académie Royal des Beaux Arts," is the fourth of the five academies of the institute of France, under the special protection of the king. Its present form was established, and its old name restored, by Louis XVIII. in 1816, and it varies but very slightly from that established by Napoleon in 1803; its original statutes were retained, with few modifications. It is composed of forty members, of whom fourteen are painters, eight sculptors, eight architects, four engravers, and six musical composers. All the members of each academy are eligible to any other: each academy has its distinct government, but the establishments of the institute are common to all the academies. The academy has a class of ten foreign associates, correspondents both French and foreign, and a class of ten honorary members called free academicians, or associés libres. The office of secretary is for life, with a salary attached to it of 6000 francs. The title of an academician is, Membre de l'Institut. The members are elected by ballot, and the election is subject to the approval of the crown. Every one of the forty academicians has a salary of 1500 francs, if he be constant in attendance at the meetings of the academy, otherwise, a deduction is made for every time that he is absent; and if he do not attend during the whole year, the deduction from his salary is 300 francs, which are divided among those who do attend. The meetings of the academy are weekly; prizes are distributed annually; and those who

obtain the grand prizes in the different classes, except engraving, are sent to Rome, where they are educated in the French academy for three years, at the expense of the government. The Institute of France is maintained entirely by the French government; the funds are managed by a committee of ten members, two from each academy, of which the minister of public instruction is the president. The other four academies are the Académie Français; the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres; the Académie des Sciences; and the Académie des Sciences Morales, et Politiques. The last was founded by Louis Philippe, in 1832.

Each academy has a president and a vice-president, who succeeds the president in his office, which is annual. The election is arranged by ballot, and the same member is not immediately re-eligible. The president, the vice-president, the secretary, and the members of the administrative committee of each academy, constitute or did constitute a committee of finance for their respective academies. In the time of Napoleon, those who obtained the grand prizes, in all five classes, were sent to the French academy at Rome for five years. The students in painting and sculpture thus sent out, were obligated to send to Paris within the first three years of their period, respectively, a study in oil colours and a model, which, however, remained the property of the artists. In the fourth year, they were respectively required to send home, a copy of a picture by a celebrated master, and a copy in marble of an ancient statue; in both cases the choice of the works being left to the artists themselves: these works became the property of the nation, as also did those of the fifth year, which were an original picture, containing more than two figures of the life size, by the painter; and an original model of a naked figure, also of the life-size, by the sculptor. The engravers were obligated to send an engraving of figures of a certain size, or, if medallists or gem engravers, a medal, or a gem in rilievo and intaglio.* There were at this time two decennial prizes of 10,000 francs each, for the academicians, one for painting, and one for sculpture.

* These pensioners are afterwards entitled to the style of "Ancien Pensionnaire de l'Académie de France à Rome."

The schools of instruction in the arts are not in the palace of the Institute, nor are they a part of the academy; there is a distinct establishment, entitled the "Ecole Royale des Beaux Arts," which is under the superintendence of four directors assisted by eight professors, who do duty in rotation. Lectures are also given by twenty professors on all the different subjects connected with painting, sculpture, and architecture. It has occupied, since 1816, the buildings of the old convent of the "Petits Augustins," where Lenoir had collected the "Musée des Monuments Français," which was dispersed by order of the government in that year. A great part of the present edifice, however, is new, and has been built since 1830, by M. Duban: it contains galleries for collections, and commodious lecture and exhibition rooms. In the chapel, which has been restored, has been placed Sigalon's large copy of the "Last Judgment," by Michelangelo.

The Akademie der Bildenden Künste, of Vienna, is both school and assembly of honour, but the number of its members is not limited in its statutes. It is under the immediate protection of the emperor, through the curator, and independent of every other authority; all the servants of the academy must wear the same livery as the servants of the imperial court. It uses for its seal, the imperial eagle, with the inscription, "Cæsarea Regia Accademia Artium."

The schools of the academy are four, namely, painting and sculpture, engraving, architecture, and ornamental design. Each school is under the superintendence of a director, who is assisted by a professor for each class of the particular division, and these have likewise assistant masters, called correctors. The directors and professors of the schools are ex-officio members of the council of the academy, Akademie-Rath. The offices of curator, president, and secretary, are for life; the appointments are made by the council, but require the ratification of the emperor. The curator, as already mentioned in another place, must be some high officer of state; the president cannot, and the secretary need not, be an artist. The directors and professors of the schools, whose offices are also permanent, are likewise elected by the council, with the sanction of the emperor: the choice of correctors, or masters, is ratified by the curator. All members of the academy are exempt from military service,

and from the tax on trades and professions. The members of the academy, both professional and honorary, are elected by the academy as a body, and the election is ratified by the curator.

Candidates for academical honours must present a specimen as a reception piece, which, upon their election, becomes the property of the academy. Engravers are obliged to present to the academy an impression of every work executed by them, subsequent to their election as members. Honorary members vote at the general meetings of the academy.

In the old Academy of Painting of Paris, there was a degree, or rank termed, Agréé, which was peculiar to the French academy : the rank of associate in the Royal Academy of London, was probably taken from this rank in the French academy, yet they were degrees of a very different nature; the *members*, however, were chosen from the agréés.

The advocates of academies are not agreed as to the objects of their establishment, many asserting that they are intended for the *promotion*, while others maintain, on the contrary, that their establishment was imperative for the *preservation* of the arts; by affording an adequate elementary instruction, and by offering as an inducement to exertion, honours and distinction to those deserving of them. It is a fair question how far either of these purposes has been served; as to the preservation, perhaps an affirmative may be acceded, but as regards the promotion, it is very doubtful, beyond the creation and preservation of a uniform style of art, through out Europe generally. It is this suppression of originality, this levelling of all capacities to one standard, that is the chief danger to be guarded against in an academic education. That an assembly of students constantly aiming at the same ends, copying the same models in the same manner, should acquire a very great sameness of thought and style, is not extraordinary; and it is this consummation, the trim method of mediocrity, that is the shoal that the academic helmsman has to avoid. Oral instruction should be made as prominent as practical instruction in academies, principles and examples should reciprocally illustrate each other, the necessity of reflection enforced as prominently as mechanical dexterity, and then the ideas would keep pace with the fingers.

Oral instruction, proceeding from a competent source, is

the only corrective or preventive of this general mere technical tendency of academic education. It should, therefore, be the aim of all academies to appoint efficient persons to give frequent lectures on all the various branches of study, constituting the substance of an academic course of study, on the history, the principles, and the practice of art; to show what may be done by pointing out what has been done; to distinguish between what is essential and what is accessory; what to be emulated and what to be deprecated. It is difficult to see how a *well-regulated* academy can be prejudicial to the arts; the multiplication of the labourers in the field of art, when well instructed, can only be denounced as a prejudice to the cause of art, by a narrow-minded selfishness—the labourers in the cause of truth and beauty cannot be too numerous. It is perfectly true, on the other hand, that academies are not necessary to the production of great artists; it is also an incontestable fact that the rise of academies has been coincident with the decline of art; yet this does not show that the latter was a consequence of the former, though it may be owing to their inefficient systems. However this may be, the artists of the seventeenth century, unable to overlook the obvious decline of art hurrying to its consummation, associated together for its preservation; and thus, gratuitous academies of art supplanted the old-established system of *family tuition*, to which the famous schools of Italy owed nearly all their greatness.

It is to the decline of taste that Fuseli attributes the origin of academies, rather than impute to them the coincident deterioration of art. He confesses, however, that the remedy was inefficient; that the arts continued to retrograde, notwithstanding academies; that they are unable to check the decline of, or to correct the public indifference to, art. "The very proposals," he says, "of premiums, honours, and rewards to excite talent or rouse genius, prove, of themselves, that the age is unfavourable to art; for had it the patronage of the public, how could it want them? We have now been in possession of an academy more than half a century; all the intrinsic means of forming a style alternate at our commands; professional instruction has never ceased to direct the student; premiums are distributed to rear talent and stimulate emulation, and stipends are granted to relieve

the wants of genius, and finish education. And what is the result? If we apply to our exhibition, what does it present, in the aggregate, but a gorgeous display of varied powers, condemned, if not to the beasts, at least to the dictates of fashion and vanity? What, therefore, can be urged against the conclusion that, as far as the public is concerned, the art is sinking, and threatens to sink still deeper, from the want of demand for great and significant works? Florence, Bologna, Venice, each singly taken, produced, in the course of the sixteenth century alone, more great historic pictures than all Britain taken together, from its earliest attempts at painting to its present efforts. What are we to conclude from this? That the soil from which Shakspeare and Milton sprang is unfit to rear the genius of poetic art? or find the cause of this seeming impotence in that general change of habits, customs, pursuits, and amusements which for near a century has stamped the national character of Europe with apathy or discountenance of the genuine principles of art?

"But if the severity of these observations, this denudation of our present state, moderates our hopes, it ought to invigorate our efforts for the ultimate preservation and — if immediate restoration be hopeless — the gradual recovery of art. To raise the arts to a conspicuous height may not perhaps be in our power: we shall have deserved well of posterity if we succeed in stemming their further downfall; if we fix them on the solid base of principle. If it be out of our power to furnish the student's activity with adequate practice, we may contribute to form his theory; and criticism founded on experiment, instructed by comparison, in possession of the labours of every epoch of art, may spread the genuine elements of taste, and check the present torrent of affectation and insipidity.

"This is the real use of our institution, if we may judge from analogy. Soon after the middle of the sixteenth century, when the gradual evanescence of the great luminaries in art began to alarm the public, an idea started at Florence of uniting the most eminent artists into a society, under the immediate patronage of the Grand Duke, and the title of Academy. It had something of the conventual air, has even now its own chapel, and celebrates an annual festival with appropriate ceremonies — less designed to promote than to

prevent the gradual debasement of art. Similar associations in other places were formed in imitation; and, at the time of the Carracci, even the private schools of painters adopted the same name. All, whether public or private, supported by patronage or individual contribution *were, and are, symptoms of art in distress; monuments of public dereliction and decay of taste.* But they are at the same time the asylum of the student, the theatre of his exercises, the repositories of the materials, the archives of the documents of our art, whose principles their officers are bound now to maintain, and for the preservation of which they are responsible to posterity, undebauched by the flattery, heedless of the sneers, undismayed by the frown of their own time." *

This is a peculiar view, and it is evidently quite distinct from, and even opposed to, that opinion which maintains that academies are the promoters of the arts. It is very probable that the academy of Florence, and perhaps some other of the earliest academies, were founded chiefly with a view of fellowship, and secondarily under an idea that the fellowship of distinguished artists must conduce to the establishment and preservation of the most approved principles of art. However, that this worthy disinterestedness was the prime mover in the foundation of subsequent academies, is barely more than possible.

Dr. Waagen, director of the gallery of Berlin, another eminent critic, though not professional, has expressed an opinion more decidedly against academies; and the effect which Fuseli attributes to public apathy is by him, in a great measure, attributed to the operation of academies themselves. Though of course *public patronage* is not a mere phrase, and artists are not the arbitrators of the state of the arts, there is a portion or degree of public patronage which is quite beyond their control, and entirely independent of the effect of their works. Dr. Waagen, in his evidence before the committee of the House of Commons, in 1835, in answer to a question regarding the best method of practically promoting the fine arts, gave an answer of which the following extract, as immediately connected with this subject, may be here usefully quoted. Speaking of the relative advantages of private masters and public schools of the arts or academies, he

* Lecture xii.

says — "Instead of following the 'mode of feeling' of a distinguished master, to which the pupil attached himself as to something living, until he was confirmed in the development of his own sentiment of art, in academies the cold general rule is substituted, which the young man is strictly bound to follow, according to the infallible direction of the professors, as the only correct method. In this manner, in the 18th century, a great number of works of very limited merit were produced, in which all academical rules of composition, drawing and chiaroscuro were strictly observed, which, notwithstanding, appear only as well-executed exercises, and leave the spectator cold, because they are wanting in the first and most indispensable attributes of works of art, namely, the impress of the vivid individual feeling of the artist, which is the real soul of a work of art. If it possesses this 'impress' of the artist's feeling, we overlook the possible defects in drawing and colour, as so many works of the ancient artists prove; when this impress is wanting, the most perfect acquirements in other degrees of art cannot replace it.

"The natural result of the academic institutions consequently, was that on comparing a number of specimens of the different schools, such as those in Paris, Petersburg, and other places, all exhibited a striking similarity of manner, while, in the earlier times and in the earlier method of teaching, the character of the schools of different nations, and that of each individual artist, was entirely original and distinct. As, in Dutch gardens, the different kinds of trees were clipped to the same forms, so it was the case in academies with the different talents of different pupils. Would not any one feel a greater pleasure in the free growth of the trees in a forest, in preference to the monotonous uniformity of a Dutch garden? By this academic method, which deadened the natural talent, it is sufficiently explained why, out of so great a number of academic pupils, so few distinguished painters have arisen. The three most distinguished artists which, for instance, Germany produced in the eighteenth century, namely, Mengs, Denner, and Dietrich, owed their education not to academies, but were educated after the old manner. So, in our own days, the two most distinguished of the living artists of the German school, Cornelius and Overberk, have risen to eminence in the most decided oppo-

sition to the academies; and the most eminent modern English artists, namely, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Barry, Wilson, and Flaxman, did not receive their artistical education in an academy. That these men, when they were already celebrated artists, became members of academies, has nothing to do with the question, which is simply this: whether the academies have obtained their objects as institutions of instruction? It must not, therefore, mislead us in favour of academies, that in our times a great many of the most celebrated artists have been members of academies. From the beginning it must have been the interest of those academies, by the reception of persons who enjoy a great reputation, to procure to the academies splendour and distinction, which otherwise would often have been wanting. With this, another injurious effect of the academies has been connected, by means of the official distinctions which the academies enjoy through the influence of the state. They have attained a preference over all the artists that do not belong to the academies, which the academies watch over very jealously, and have thus introduced into the freedom of art an unsalutary degree of authority and interference. It occurs often that a very *mediocre* artist, of which every academy counts some few among its many members, stands much higher in the state as an academician than the most talented artist who does not belong to an academy. As the majority of mankind look more on authority than on genuine merit, it has occurred often that a moderate artist, being an academician, has found plenty of employment, while artists of considerable talent, who do not belong to such an institution, remain unemployed and unnoticed."

This is the sum, perhaps, of what can be justly said against academies; this, however, applies not to what academies *might become*, but to what they *have been*. Would not a thoroughly efficient system of education counteract even all these ill consequences — a system which should make the principles as prominent as the practice of art? The discourses of the official lecturers should be made to supply the place of the intercourse and conversation which passed between the pupils and the masters of old, and to which the individual development of the early painters of Italy was mainly indebted.

JAMES BARRY, with whose lectures this volume commences, was born at Cork, October 11. 1741. His father, John Barry, was of good descent, but was employed, in early life, as a builder, and, for a long time, as a coasting trader between England and Ireland. Barry himself made some voyages, when a boy, in his father's vessel, but he found this occupation so distasteful to him, that his father was induced to allow him to follow his own inclination, and put him to school in his native place. Barry appears to have made his first attempt at oil painting as early as the age of seventeen: at about twenty years of age he had made such progress as to venture to visit Dublin with one of his performances, which, exhibited in the rooms of the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, obtained him the notice and friendship of Burke: the subject of this picture was, "St. Patrick Baptizing the King of Cashel." In his twenty-third year, on the invitation of Burke, he visited London; and after a year's delay in the great metropolis, he was enabled, by the noble generosity of the same friend, to visit Italy, and prosecute his studies in Rome.

Barry was deeply impressed with all that he saw in the "Eternal City," and, indeed, was delighted with the great works of Italian art generally; but he appears to have been more fascinated by the technical excellence of the Carracci and their scholars, than impressed by the profounder qualities of the works of the great heads of the Florentine and Roman schools: the remains of ancient sculpture, however, appear to have exacted the greatest share of his admiration; in these he found the beauty of form in its fulness: in painting, he found the highest perfection in the colouring of Titian.

He left Rome, after a stay of nearly five years, in the spring of 1770, and passing leisurely through the various cities, so rich in the treasures of art, in the north of Italy, he returned to England in the early part of the following year. He gained considerable notice in London by a picture of Venus *, the first work executed by him after his return

* It is engraved by Valentine Green.

from Italy; this was followed by several others, which all tended to confirm his reputation; and when, in the early part of 1774, a scheme was promulgated for the decoration of St. Paul's Cathedral, with large historical pictures, Barry embraced the supposed opportunity with enthusiasm: but the whole plan, as is well known, soon fell to the ground, through the bigoted opposition of Dr. Terrick, then bishop of London.* Barry, however, was not to be so easily set aside; and as he could not obtain a place in St. Paul's for the display of his powers, he sought it elsewhere, and found ample scope in the great room of the Society of Arts at the Adelphi. Here, in 1777, he commenced gratuitously, like Polygnotus of old, his great series of pictures, illustrative of the civilisation of man, and his final state of beatitude, or misery, hereafter. These pictures are six in number; the first represents the story of Orpheus; the second, a Greek Harvest Home, or Thanksgiving to Ceres and Bacchus, — a beautiful composition in every respect; the third, the Crowning of the Victors at Olympia; the fourth, Navigation, or the Triumph of the Thames; the fifth, the Distribution of Premiums by the Society of Arts; and the sixth and last, Elysium, or the State of Final Retribution.† These works, though, with the exception of the last, full of vigour of conception, are executed with an impetuosity which appears to have spurned all the more delicate refinements of art: the painter's own peculiar individuality of character is forcibly mirrored in them; and it is rather singular that they should present such a forcible contrast to what one would be led to expect from the quality of his lectures, in which material excellence, and all the technical perfections of art, are most prominently inculcated. In the Victors at Olympia, however, some parts of the human figure are admirably drawn, and in an elevated and manly taste. But of all these works, the Greek Harvest Home is the most perfect as a picture; it is a composition full of meaning and beauty, and appeals forcibly to our best sympathies: it is a beautiful illustration of the often quoted exclamation of Virgil, "Oh, too fortunate husbandmen, — if they did but

* See note to Opie's Second Lecture.

† They were engraved in a bold effective style by Barry himself.

know their happiness."* These pictures were finished in 1783; and the only remuneration Barry received for his nearly seven years' labour, were the proceeds of the two exhibitions of the works, and two hundred and fifty guineas presented to him, at different times, by the society.† He received, however, considerable benefit from the etchings of these designs, which he completed in 1792.

Barry was elected Professor of Painting to the Royal Academy in 1782, as successor to Mr. Penny, its first professor; but he was again expelled that body in 1799, chiefly in consequence of his somewhat intemperate publication, entitled, *A Letter to the Dilettanti Society, respecting the obtention of certain matters essentially necessary for the improvement of public taste, and for accomplishing the original views of the Royal Academy of Great Britain*, published in 1797, and of some correspondence consequent on that publication.‡ How far Barry was justified in his

* *Georg.* ii. 458. See Barry's Second Lecture.

† These six pictures are described by Barry himself, in a pamphlet entitled, *An Account of a series of Pictures in the Great Room of the Society of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, at the Adelphi*, 1783.

‡ Whatever may have been Barry's provocation, he was at least sincere in all those schemes and efforts for the advance of art which led to his rupture with his colleagues: and his expulsion from the Academy appears to have been abrupt and irregular. A detailed account of this affair will be found at the end of the second volume of Barry's *Works*, in the form of an Appendix to the Letter to the Dilettanti Society. The following portion of the correspondence may be here quoted: —

"Sir, — I am informed that, after my departure from the general meeting of the Royal Academy yesterday evening, the Academy proceeded to a vote, tending to my expulsion from their body, and that the professed ground of that measure was the admission imputed to me of the charges on which it was founded. As that resolution, according to the forms of the Academy, must undergo further discussion at another meeting, the interest I take in the good opinion of my fellow academicians obliges me to lose no time in applying to you for information, whether such be the fact; and if it be, I am to request that you will take the earliest opportunity to demand from the proper authority, in my name, an authentic copy of the articles exhibited against me; which were publicly and repeatedly refused to me at the two last general meetings. It will afford me extreme satisfaction if, by my timely possession of that paper, as well as of all others in your custody, which may be necessary to the fair and full discussion of the case, I shall be enabled to offer such a defence as shall induce my colleagues immediately to recal their most severe and unmerited sentence. But if, unfortunately, I shall

charges against the Academy, that every motion he made for the advance of art was strenuously opposed by a mercenary cabal, the reader may investigate for himself in the copious documents, published by Barry on the subject: that an individual of Barry's impetuous character should, on finding his favourite schemes constantly thwarted, occasionally give way to the impulses of temper is not extraordinary, but it is remarkable that a whole deliberative body should allow its decisions to be completely controlled by personal resentment.

Barry ended his life of turmoil and trouble on the 22d of February, 1806, and his body, after lying in state in the great room at the Adelphi, was buried, with the usual ceremonies, in St. Paul's Cathedral.

be disappointed in that expectation, you will be pleased to acquaint those gentlemen with my most unwilling determination to lay myself at his Majesty's royal feet, with the humble but assured hope of obtaining redress from his Majesty of an oppression drawn upon me only by my zeal for that institution, of which his Majesty is the great founder and constant indispensable protector, and inflicted upon me with a contempt of the forms practised in every well-regulated society towards the most atrocious offenders.

"I am, Sir, your very humble servant,

"JAMES BARRY.

"P. S. — I expect you will favour me with a written answer to this letter as soon as may be.

"To John Richards, Esq., Secretary to the Royal
"Academy. Dated from the Lyceum in the Strand,
"Tuesday, April 16. 1799."

After receiving, on the following day, a notification from Mr. Richards that that gentleman could not give him any information without the authority of the Academy, his formal dismissal was announced to him on the 24th, as follows: —

"Sir, — The General Assembly of Academicians, having received the report of the committee appointed to investigate your academical conduct, decided, that you be removed from the office of professor of painting, — and, by a second vote, that you be expelled the Royal Academy.

"The Journals of Council, the Report of the Committee, and the Resolutions of the General Assembly, having been laid before the King, his Majesty was graciously pleased to approve the whole of the proceedings, and strike your name from the roll of academicians.

"I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

"JOHN RICHARDS, R. A., Sec.

"James Barry,
"Royal Academy, April 24. 1799."

Barry delivered, in all, six lectures to the students of the Royal Academy: he commenced his duties in 1784, and continued to deliver the course, with various additions and improvements, until 1798. These lectures, it is unnecessary to say, are compositions of great merit; not as mere literary productions, but for the general sterling quality of their subject matter, for independence and originality of thought, and for their unshackled freedom of expression, which could but suffer by the slightest castigation of the fastidious pen of ordinary conventionalism. Still, like all individual productions, they have their individual bias: they frequently betray a dominant partiality for the outward form of art, for the material and technical excellence of execution. Barry's greatest delight was evidently rather in the form and colour of a work of art, than in its sentiment; there are passages in these discourses which, if extracted and compared, would convey the idea that their author considered Raphael and Michelangelo to have been respectively surpassed by Domenichino and Pellegrino Tibaldi, or Parmigiano: he awards the Carracci and their school a far higher position than would be assigned them at the present day.

Barry had great knowledge and experience, and his materials were generally well at his command: some of his illustrations are extremely happy, as, for instance, the following, in his Lecture on Chiaroscuro: — "The same principles of uniformity and variety, or of variegated unity, which must be previously pursued in so arranging and constructing the figures and general forms of a picture, that they may serve as a proper substratum for that chiaroscuro which brings them to the sight as an harmonious totality — these same principles, and these *only*, are the constituents of all similar agreeable effects in architecture."—"But what is immediately for our purpose, and was, indeed, my inducement for mentioning architecture in this place, is, the occasion it affords for the illustration of the utility and importance of chiaroscuro, and the absolute necessity of its being a leading consideration in the fabrication of all objects presented to the sight. Attending only to the actual fact, without entering into the reasons or the necessities which might have occasioned it, we must confess, that many of our churches, and the public buildings of the last age, have the same bad

appearance as Chinese pictures, where there is no light-and-shade to give brilliancy, repose, and majesty of effect; mere walls inlaid with pilasters or half columns, unconnected perforations for windows and doors, and nothing to relieve the sight from a dull, disgusting, monotony of light, without shade. This hateful insipid uniformity cannot be removed by diversifying forms on the same surface, like mere outlines on paper."—"Whatever impressions of boldness and masculine vigour, whatever soft and feminine gracefulness, and whatever easy splendid luxuriance, men of taste and sentiment have discovered in the three Grecian orders, these peculiar characteristics are in nothing more discoverable than in their several chiaroscuros."—"To descend even to Gothic churches — their cloisters, aisles, and the different partitions of their front and lateral views, almost always present the eye with large masses of shade, which give the necessary support and value to the parts illuminated, and produce such a relievo and effect in the totality, as makes a considerable impression of awe and grandeur on the mind, in despite of its very barbarous and defective particulars. Thus it is apparent, that variegated unity, and its consequent relievo of a proportionate light and shade, is the operating cause of the beautiful arrangements in architecture, as well as in painting and sculpture."

After the expulsion of Barry, Fuseli was made Professor of Painting in his place, and he commenced his lectures in 1801; but upon being appointed Keeper of the Academy, on the death of Wilton, the sculptor, in 1804, he resigned the professorship of painting, and was succeeded in this office by Opie.

John Opie was born in the parish of St. Agnes, near Truro, in Cornwall, in May, 1761: his father and grandfather were carpenters. He appears to have been a precocious boy, and is said, at the age of twelve, to have made such progress in Euclid, arithmetic, and penmanship, as to have been enabled to commence an evening school for the

instruction of the peasants of his parish.* He appears, also, at a very early age, to have displayed a talent for drawing; and some of his juvenile performances, having attracted the notice of Dr. Wolcot, that gentleman recommended him to his acquaintances, and eventually brought him with him to London, under the firm persuasion that Opie's talents were destined soon to obtain a notoriety even in the metropolis. Wolcot introduced him to Sir Joshua Reynolds; and, in 1782, Opie appeared as an exhibitor at the Royal Academy. He, for some time, made a considerable sensation as the "Cornish genius;" but, the novelty passed, he had the same up-hill course to pursue with his fellow-labourers in the field of art. Opie, however, maintained his position as a portrait painter, and he also produced frequent essays in historical art: among his best historical works are accounted the Murder of James I., King of Scotland; the Presentation in the Temple; Jepthah's Vow; the Death of Rizzio; Arthur taken Prisoner; and Arthur with Hubert. "His pictures," says West, "possessed, in an eminent degree, what painters call *breadth*. They were deficient in some of the more refined distinctions which mark the highly-polished works of Raphael, Titian, or Reynolds; but they displayed so invariable an appearance of truth, as seemed sufficient to make a full apology, if it had been wanted, for the absence of all the rest.

"On his canvas, in general, no heterogeneous tones appeared: all was played in one key. This principle was observed with the extremest nicety in *single figures*, though not always equally in the *whole*. The figure and the back ground were each *separately* just, but they did not always harmonise. One of the happiest instances of his labours, in the perfect harmony of tone, is the picture of *Belisarius*, at present (1807) in the British Gallery, and soon to add value to that of the Marquis of Stafford. His portrait of Mr. Fox, in the exhibition of 1805, and that of the Duke of Gloucester, which will be seen in the ensuing one, are examples of similar excellence.

"In his drawing, the same principle prevailed as in his

* The viith number of *The Artist*, which was inscribed to the memory of Opie: it is printed at the end of the memoir which precedes the edition of Opie's Lectures, published in 1809.

colouring. Every thing was homogeneous; every thing was marked with precision, and in its place. He gave vivacity and force of expression to every subject of his pencil."*

This is the criticism of a friend, but it is doubtless true of Opie's best pictures. He was, however, very unequal in his works: the want of harmony spoken of by West, is very obtrusive in some, and others are wholly deficient in transparency; and so far from possessing an effect of reality, remind most painfully that they are but painted representations.

Opie died in the prime of life, April 9, 1807, exactly one month after the first delivery of his lectures at the Royal Academy; and was buried near Sir Joshua Reynolds, in St. Paul's Cathedral. He was twice married; the accomplished Amelia Opie was his second wife; she survived her husband many years: he was divorced from his first wife.

Opie obtained the professorship of painting in 1805, but he delivered his course of lectures but once, in 1807, and then in an incomplete state. It was his intention to compose six lectures, as follows:—design or drawing, colouring, chiaroscuro, composition, invention, and expression; those on composition and expression he did not live to write.

The most striking feature of Opie's lectures is, their complete dominance of feeling: they are the ebullition of an ardent enthusiasm—fluent, forcible, and eloquent—but too exclusively the expression of feeling. Opie dwells rather upon his own estimate of the value and importance of art generally, than upon its actual principles. Like Barry, he has openly displayed his partiality for the eclecticism of the Carracci; but though more fluent and more elegant in his style than his predecessor, he remains far behind him in subject matter, in variety of example and illustration, both historical and critical. It must however, be confessed, that the opportunities of Opie were few compared with those of Barry, and that he was cut off in the commencement of his career, while Barry numbered years of experience, in which to mature the fruits of his superior opportunities. No one sincerely interested in art can peruse the lectures of Opie without participating in their enthusiasm, and at the same time being both greatly pleased and instructed by them.

* Number of *The Artist* already referred to.

Henry Fuseli (correctly Fuessli) was born at Zürich, February 7. 1741. He early displayed an inclination for the arts, but as he was destined by his father, John Caspar Fuessli, for the church, he was placed in the Collegium Carolinum, at Zürich, and there received his degree of Master of Arts, and shortly afterwards entered into holy orders. Our young priest had scarcely commenced his ecclesiastical career, when, together with his young friend Lavater, he took up the cause of an injured family against a magistrate of Zürich; and having succeeded in obtaining the conviction of the unjust steward, his friends thought it advisable that he should leave Zürich for a while, in order to escape the resentment of the family. Fuseli left Zürich, in company with Lavater, and the distinguished professor Sulzer, in the spring of 1763, and they proceeded in company to Berlin, where Sulzer was professor of mathematics: he remained but a short time in Berlin, and, by the advice of Sulzer, he visited England, where he arrived at the close of the year 1763. He arrived in this country in the company of Sir Andrew Mitchell.

Fuseli long maintained himself in London, by literature, which he was enabled to do with comparative ease, as he had obtained several valuable introductions, through Sir Andrew Mitchell. One of his first productions was a translation of Winckelmann's "Reflections on the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks," published, with a dedication to Lord Scarsdale, in 1765.

After spending some years in literary labours, he at length, by the advice of Sir Joshua Reynolds, ventured to embrace painting as his profession, and he accordingly, in 1770, set out for Italy, with a view of prosecuting studies to that end: in the spring of 1779 he arrived again in London, after an absence of eight years. Fuseli first attracted notice as a painter, by his picture of "The Nightmare," painted in 1781; a work which, like all the later productions of Fuseli, owed its celebrity purely to its idea: his long study in the capital of the arts appears to have totally failed in enabling him to acquire a mastery over the material or technical department of his art. He next produced some subjects for

Boydell's Shakspeare Gallery; his great work, however, was his own "Milton Gallery," in forty-seven compositions, many of which are of very large proportions. This great work occupied Fuseli only nine years, and then probably at intervals merely. A collection of forty-seven large pictures, painted in about twice as many months, were, of course, little more than sketched or indicated on the canvas. With Fuseli, however, the time was ample; his pictures were finished as soon as their ideas were thrown upon the canvas; and it was quite out of his power to elaborate. These ideas, it is true, were in the highest degree original, vigorous, and impressive; as ideas, as conceptions, they are entitled to all our admiration, but if painting depends upon certain conditions which constitute a peculiar channel for the conveyance of ideas, it is evident that a picture must be something more than an idea; it is a dramatic action, represented in strict conformity with the laws of nature, both in its universals and its particulars; its means being form, light-and-shade, and colour. It is these particulars of form, light-and-shade, and colour, that is, *individuality*, which Fuseli either wholly disregarded, or could not perceive. He is, perhaps, the most remarkable instance of the deficiency of individuality of representation in the whole history of art. It would probably have been less labour for Fuseli to have produced a second "Milton Gallery," than to have painted the portraits of two brothers, of an ordinary degree of family resemblance, in such a manner that any person could have distinguished one from the other, from their features alone. During his long career, he painted only two portraits. He appears to have had somewhat of Blake's constitution of mind; what he saw proceeded from his ideas, rather than his ideas from what he saw: he appropriated only general impressions. Fuseli himself, according to his biographer*, attributed this peculiarity to a deficiency of will; his will was not co-ordinate with his powers. A little investigation however, will show, that exactly the reverse was the case; his powers were subordinate to his will, which in his impetuosity would not allow him to elaborate one idea, before it was followed by another, to which he was as eager to give

* See *Knowles's Life and Writings of Fuseli*, 3 vols. 8vo. 1831.

expression. This "Milton Gallery," as is well known, was a source of unmitigated disappointment to Fuseli: after the close of its second exhibition, in July, 1800, he observed to a friend—"I am fed with honour, and suffered to starve, if they could starve me;" and in writing to his friend Mr. Lock, of Norbury Park, a short time afterwards, he says:—"The greater part of my exhibition, the rejected family of a silly father, are now again rolled up, or packed together against the walls of my study, to be seasoned for dust, the worm, and oblivion." The principal of these compositions were:—the Lazar House; Satan starting from the touch of Ithuriel's spear; Satan calling up his Legions; the Lubbar Fiend; the Vision of the Deluge; Eve newly created, led to Adam; Sin pursued by Death; and a few others, which were purchased by the painter's friends.

In March, 1801, Fuseli delivered his first three lectures at the Royal Academy; they were well received, both by the Academy, and by the public, when they were published shortly afterwards, in the month of May of that year. In 1805 Fuseli became keeper of the Academy, and of course resigned the professorship of painting, in which Opie succeeded him. After the death of Opie, in 1807, Mr. Tresham was elected as his successor, but after a lapse of two years, this gentleman declined to lecture, on the plea of indisposition, and resigned his situation; and as no candidate for the chair appeared to succeed him, the academicians unanimously elected Fuseli in his place, in 1810, notwithstanding a law of the Academy that no two offices were to be held by the same person. Fuseli continued professor of painting for the remainder of his life: he died at the residence of the Countess of Guildford, at Putney Hill, April 16. 1825, a few weeks after the last delivery of his lectures: his remains were interred with considerable pomp in St. Paul's Cathedral.

Fuseli delivered in all twelve lectures at the Royal Academy, but they are very unequal in merit; several of them are unimportant, and, at most, mere fragments referring to their subjects rather than illustrating them in all their bearings: such, for instance, are those on chiaroscuro, on design, on colour, on the proportions of the human form, and on the "present state of the art." As in the execution of his pictures, we have an incessant repetition of the same peculiar

treatment of generalities, their subjects alone being different, yet nearly all from one province — the marvellous; so in his lectures, we search in vain for that practical illustration by which alone the mind is enabled to appropriate new ideas: here and there we have a bright exception, as in the remarks, on his brief allusion to expression*, on the several pictures of the betrayal and capture of Samson, by Julio Romano, Vandyck, and Rembrandt. "Considering it as a drama," says Fuseli, "Julio forms the plot, Vandyck unravels it, and Rembrandt shows the extreme of the catastrophe.

"In the composition of Julio, Samson, satiated with pleasure, plunged into sleep and stretched on the ground, rests his head, and presses with his arm the thigh of Delilah on one side, whilst, on the other, a nimble minion, busily, but with timorous caution, fingers and clips his locks. Such is his fear, that, to be firm, he rests one knee on a footstool, tremblingly watching the sleeper, and ready to escape at his least motion. Delilah, seated between both, fixed by the weight of Samson, warily turns her head towards a troop of warriors in the background; with the left arm stretched out, she beckons their leader; with the finger of the right hand she presses her lip, to enjoin silence and noiseless approach. The Herculean make and lion foot of Samson; his perturbed, though ponderous sleep; the quivering agility of the curled favourite employed; the harlot graces and meritricious elegance, contrasted by equal firmness and sense of danger, in Delilah; the attitude and look of the grim veteran who heads the ambush — whilst they give us the clue to all that followed, keep us in anxious suspense: we palpitate in breathless expectation. This is the plot.

"The terrors which Julio made us forebode, Vandyck summons to our eyes. The mysterious lock is cut; the dreaded victim is roused from the lap of the harlot-priestess. Starting, unconscious of his departed power, he attempts to spring forward, and, with one effort of his mighty breast and expanded arms, to dash his foes to the ground, and fling the alarmed traitress from him. In vain — shorn of his strength, he is borne down by the weight of the mailed chief that throws himself upon him, and overpowered by a throng of

* Lecture V.

infuriate satellites. But though overpowered — less aghast than indignant — his eye flashes reproach on the perfidious female whose wheedling caresses drew the fatal secret from his breast. The plot is unfolded, and what succeeds, too horrible for the sense, is left for fancy to brood upon, or drop it.

"This moment of horror the gigantic but barbarous genius of Rembrandt chose, and, without a metaphor, *executed* a subject which humanity, judgment, and taste taught his rivals only to *treat;* he displays a scene which no eye but that of Domitian or Nero could wish or bear to see. Samson, stretched on the ground, is held by one Philistine under him, whilst another chains his right hand; and a third, clenching his beard with one, drives a dagger into his eye with the other hand. The pain that blasts him darts expression from the contortions of the mouth, and his gnashing teeth to the cramping convulsions of the leg dashed high into the air. Some fiendlike features glare through the gloomy light, which discovers Delilah, her work now done, sliding off, the shears in her left, the locks of Samson in her right hand. No words can do justice to the expression that animates her face, and shows her less shrinking from the horrid scene than exulting in being its cause."

Fuseli's earlier lectures are the most valuable — those on ancient and modern art, on invention, and composition. Of these, the two historical lectures are highly interesting and instructive; still, they are far from possessing that originality, or that accuracy and comprehensiveness which are accredited to them; this is especially the case with the second — much is mere allusion, and much pure imagination. His exuberant fancy led him into a circumstantial detail of subject and treatment, of style and method, which owe their very existence wholly to his own imagination. The most characteristic feature of these discourses, and in which they so materially differ from his paintings, is their elaboration of style. If, with his ready erudition, Fuseli had as earnestly devoted himself to the matter of his subject as he has bestowed scrupulous care on the shape in which he has presented it, he would have earned a far greater claim to our regard. In the history of modern art, he has told us nothing that might not be obtained from many other sources; and in

his sketch of ancient art, that which is original is more fanciful than real. In the lectures of Barry, we are struck with the writer's earnest, manly efforts to convey information ; and when he wrote, the means of accomplishing his end were comparatively small, the great mass of art literature having appeared since Barry's time. In Opie we have an enthusiastic devotion to his subject, a passionate and clear exposition, at least, of his own views, expressed with a perspicuity and fluency certainly remarkable, considering the nature of his early education. In Fuseli, on the other hand, with all the advantages of education, a familiarity with ancient and modern literature, and a long residence in Italy, we have, as the most prominent feature, an incessant aim at epigrammatic terseness of style, a striking antithesis of idea, or a measured epithetic recurrence — a mere rhapsody of the imagination, void of even the slightest symptom of passion. The following is Fuseli's mode of expressing the elevated character of the style of Polygnotus : — " Polygnotus," says Aristotle, "*improves* the model. His invention reached the conception of undescribed being, in the Dæmon Eurynomus ; filled the chasm of description in Theseus and Pirithous, in Ariadne and Phædra ; and improved its terrors in the spectre of Tityus ; whilst colour to assist it became in his hand an organ of expression ; such was the prophetic glow which still *crimsoned* the cheeks of his Cassandra in the time of Lucian."—Eurynomus, Tityus, Theseus and Pirithous, Ariadne and Phædra, were introduced by Polygnotus into the picture of the " shades " at Delphi.

There is, however, much force in Fuseli's style, and his subject appears to be pursued with an energy that never flags. His criticism, too, is mature, and often profound ; and in this respect he goes beyond either Barry or Opie. He has placed the eclecticism of the Carracci on its proper level, and has traced the characteristic beauties or defects of the several schools with the unerring hand of the master, notwithstanding occasional exaggeration, which appears to have been an irresistible impulse of his mind. The sometimes too exclusively classical allusions, and somewhat pedantic display of learning, in which he now and then indulges, lose, in written discourses, much of the objection that they are open to in oral lectures, especially before a young and mixed

audience, very slightly informed in such matters. These allusions, however, together with Fuseli's other peculiarities of style, rendered his lectures quite unintelligible to the younger part of his auditors, until they had heard them several times: but when once comprehended, they became deservedly popular.

R. N. W.

March 7. 1848.

THE

LECTURES OF JAMES BARRY.

LECTURE I.

ON THE HISTORY AND PROGRESS OF THE ART.

GENTLEMEN,

So much has been written on the subject of painting, that it will now be difficult to say any thing in the way of general theory, which has not been already either observed upon, or hinted at by some one or other of the ingenious and learned writers of those countries of Europe, where this art has had the advantage of being early cultivated and more encouraged. Therefore, without being at all solicitous to avoid or to follow the tracks of others, I shall proceed to discharge the duty I have been honoured with, by laying before you such a series of observations as appear to me best calculated to lead your attention into that track of study, which conducted our predecessors to the excellence that has rendered them so illustrious, and which must enable us (if any thing can) to sustain and to perpetuate this excellence, and to proceed to the further attainment of whatever other desiderata may yet remain for the completing and perfecting of art.

Of all the creatures within the sphere of our inspection *man* alone appears to be endowed with powers for contemplating many of the great designations, the extensive and various uses, dependencies, and relations, in the creation that surrounds him: hence he is impressed with that just sense of beauty, of wisdom, order, and goodness, which not

only form the foundation of religion and virtue, but of all his intellectual satisfaction and happiness.

With these powers for contemplation, the passion for *imitation* is also congenial to his mind, and exhibits one of the most peculiar, and most glorious characteristics of the exalted nature of this substitute of Providence upon earth as the governing animal.

The powers of imitation are in nothing more evident than in poetry, which employs words or arbitrary signs, and in the arts of *design*, where the images of the objects themselves are exhibited to the senses in all their realities of form and colour.

I shall hereafter have occasion to dwell more particularly upon these modes of imitation, as compared with each other; but at present our remarks will be confined to the imitation effected by the arts of design, particularly that of painting, which comprehends all the others.

The rude beginnings of the arts of design are traceable amongst the most savage people; the growth and progress of them are co-extended with the general improvement of the human faculties; and the greatest and wisest nations of the world have ever considered these arts, particularly painting, when taken in its full and comprehensive sense, as one of the most accomplished ornaments of polished society. Though it will be foreign to our purpose to dwell long upon the little which happens to be preserved of the memorial and accounts of ancient art, yet a short survey of this matter may not be wholly without use.

But little is known of the Assyrians, who appear to have been the most ancient nation; and yet, scanty as our information is, we find them to have been familiar with the arts, which they practised to no inconsiderable extent.

It is recorded of Semiramis* (who flourished about a century before the calling of Abraham) that on a wall round one of her palaces, different animals were raised in bas-relief, and painted from the life; and it is worth remarking, that these figures were relieved and painted on the faces of the bricks before they were burned, and consequently must have been vitrified or enamelled.

* The period of Semiramis is uncertain, and it is even doubtful whether there was ever such a person. — W.

There was also painted on another wall the several manners of hunting all kinds of beasts. Here Semiramis herself was represented on horseback, striking a leopard through with a dart, and her husband Ninus, with his javelin, wounding a lion.

We find mention also of colossal statues of their idols, and also of Ninus and Semiramis, some in gold, others in brass; and that these works of sculpture in Assyria were not confined to temples and public places, we may be reasonably assured from the mention of the little images which Rachel stole away from her father's house. That the career of the arts in Assyria was also a very long one, we may learn from the golden statue, sixty cubits high, of Nebuchadnezzar, set up fourteen hundred years after the stealing of Laban's images.*

* As I shall have occasion, in another part of these lectures, to establish some weighty consequences on this recorded as well as remarkable fact, respecting those coloured, basso-rilievo, historical representations, which were vitrified, or enamelled on the brick walls of Babylon, at so early a period as the time of Semiramis, it is with great concern I feel myself obliged here to take notice of a very mistaken and ill-advised passage respecting this matter in one of the most deservedly celebrated works of our time. Dr. Lowth, in his new translation of the prophecy of Isaiah, ch. ix. v. 10,—"the bricks are fallen, but we build with hewn stones," has the following note on that passage, p. 77. "'The eastern bricks,' (says Sir John Chardin, see Harmer's obs. p. 176.), 'are only clay well moistened with water, and mixed with straw and dried in the sun;' so that their walls are commonly no better than our mud walls: see Maundrel, p. 124. That straw was a necessary part in the composition of this sort of bricks, to make the parts of the clay adhere together, appears from Exodus, ch. v. These bricks are properly opposed to hewn stone, so greatly superior in beauty and durableness." And, page 95, the bishop has the following note on ch. xiii. 19:—"We are astonished at the accounts which ancient historians, of the best credit, give of the immense extent, height, and thickness of the walls of Nineveh and Babylon; nor are we less astonished, when we are assured by the concurrent testimony of moderns, that no remains, not the least traces of these prodigious works, are now to be found. Our wonder will, I think, be moderated in both respects, if we consider the fabric of these celebrated walls, and the nature of the materials of which they consisted. Buildings in the East have always been, and are to this day, made of earth or clay mixed or beat up with straw to make the parts cohere, and dried only in the sun. This is their method of making bricks; see note on ch. ix. v. 9. The walls of the city were built of earth digged out on the spot, and dried upon the place; by which means both the ditch and the wall were at

On Egyptian art I shall proceed to speak with more pleasure, as we have sufficient monuments yet remaining to

once formed; the former furnishing materials for the latter. That the walls of Babylon were of this kind is well known, and Berosus expressly says, apud Joseph. Antiq. X. 2., that Nebuchadnezzar added three new walls both to the old and new city, partly of brick and bitumen, and partly of brick alone. A wall of this sort must have a great thickness in proportion to its height, otherwise it cannot stand. The thickness of the walls of Babylon is said to have been one fourth of their height, which seems to have been no more than was absolutely necessary. Maundrel, speaking of the garden walls of Damascus, 'they are,' says he, 'of a very singular structure. They are built of great pieces of earth, made in the fashion of brick, and hardened in the sun. In their dimensions they are two yards long each, and somewhat more than one broad, and half a yard thick;' and afterwards, speaking of the walls of houses, 'from this dirty way of building they have this, among other inconveniences, that upon any violent rain the whole city becomes by the washing of the houses as it were a quagmire.' (p. 124.) When a wall of this sort comes to be out of repair, and is neglected, it is easy to conceive the necessary consequences; namely, that in no long course of ages, it must totally be destroyed by the heavy rains, and at length washed away, and reduced to its original earth." And on ch. xxx. 13. the bishop has the following note. "It has been observed before, that the buildings in Asia generally consist of little better than what we call mud walls.' 'All the houses in Ispahan,' says Thevenot (vol. ii. p. 159.) 'are built of bricks made of clay and straw, and dried in the sun; and covered with a plaster made of a fine white stone. In other places in Persia, the houses are built with nothing else but such bricks, made with tempered clay and chopped straw, well mingled together and dried in the sun and then used; but the least rain dissolves them. Sir John Chardin's MS. remarks on this passage of Isaiah are very apposite: 'Murs en Asie etant faits de terre fendent ainsi par milieu et de haut en bas.' This shows clearly how obvious and expressive the image is." (P. 158.)

By this citation from Exodus, and those passages from so many travellers and learned men of high credit, it would appear that Bishop Lowth was persuaded himself, and meant to persuade his readers, that the walls of Babylon were only built of mud and straw, dried in the sun; and from his mention of the ancient historians of the best credit, who speak of those walls, without noting any circumstance of difference between the ancient and the modern accounts or surmises, another proof is afforded of the truth and general extension of an observation, which I have long since had occasion to insist upon, namely, that the bulk of men seldom see any thing either in the great spectacle of nature, or of arts, that they are not by previous studies taught to look for. Men must be taught to see, and to distinguish, and however paradoxical this may seem, yet nothing is more true: but let us turn our attention to the Abbé Terrasson, a knowing and judicious French academician, habituated to the conversation and workshops of artists, and consequently to that

authorise our deciding with more certainty upon the skill of their artists, as to taste and execution.

gusto, or quick conception, which results from the knowledge of things, and not of mere words; and although no better at Greek scholarship than our learned bishop, yet we find, that in lieu of mud walls dried in the sun, Diodorus Siculus, as rendered by the Abbé Terrasson, has burnt brick walls, *brique cuite*, with bas-reliefs, four cubits high, executed on the faces of those bricks, whilst they were yet fresh, and afterwards coloured, and then vitrified by the same heat which burned the bricks. Even the learned Latin translator of Diodorus omits the very word of his author, διετετυπωτο, which specifies those figures being in rilievo, contenting himself with rendering what he supposed to be the sense and matter of Diodorus, without regarding that word, διετετυπωτο, in which he saw no meaning or reference: although in the Lexicon of Constantini, it [διατυποω] means, informo, signo, insculpo, insignio, imprimo, &c. As to the mere matter of burning those bricks "eos in fornacibus coquebant," are the words employed in Wesseling's edition of Herodotus. The ancient writers were not mere dealers in words, as is too often the case with their translators. The knowledge of things, and the knowledge of words, being too often confounded, it is distressing to reflect what must be the fate of many exquisite gustoso remarks on arts and artists in the hands of mere bald scholarship, which is not able to penetrate even the mere surface and exterior of things: mere words, whether Greek, or Latin, or English, are but a poor qualification, when unsupported by a deep and familiar knowledge of the things treated of; and yet, for the most part, these are the people who presume to hurl indignation and anger, where they are not permitted to legislate, who can see nothing ancient without admiration, or modern without drawback and censure. However, this effrontery and hardiesse has but little relation to the amiable and respectable character of Dr. Lowth, though it may to a large proportion of the band of his literary associates: he was culpable only in not permitting Herodotus and Diodorus to judge of what they probably saw in common with so many others. The instances of metallurgic knowledge occurring in the very same page of these ancient authors should have convinced the bishop, that the Chaldeans could have been no strangers to brick-burning, to terra cotta; the knowledge and uses of which must necessarily precede, and accompany metallurgic experiments and practices. It is difficult to conceive how the bishop should have forgotten the remarkable fact of the consultation at Shenaar, long before Semiramis and Babylon. Go to! (say the subjects of Nimrod) let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly; and they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar: and against this passage in the margin, the Hebrew word is intimated to mean *burn them to a burning*. Surely the bishop had no occasion to have shrunk back from the passage respecting those painted or enamelled bas-reliefs on the burnt brick walls of Babylon, as related by Diodorus. It was not too much for the capacity of the time. The glass beads of all colours found upon the Mummies of Egypt may be well supposed coeval with the time of Semiramis:

It has been justly observed (and will hold good of all the Egyptian statues and fragments of statues, which I have

the metallic and semimetallic substances diluted with those glasses whilst in fusion, might make his conscience easy on this head; and even to go still further back, what shall we say of the glass cases, and statues of metal, enclosing the dead bodies and other similar practices by the very Ethiopian predecessors and teachers of these Egyptians, so long before the existence of Semiramis, and also possibly so long before the existence of any mummies in Egypt. But if, after all, the bishop was still resolved upon walls of mud and straw, what hindered that he could not prudently have cased them with a facing of burnt brick, of which he might have examples in Vitruvius and Palladio, more especially as the great river Euphrates, and the lake and the ditch formed from it, would be likely to operate incessantly, and much more destructively than the mere showers of rain observed by Thevenot, which after all could not be very frequent in such a climate? It is also possible, that from these accounts of Maundrel and Thevenot, the reader may conclude too generally respecting the usage and the state of the arts amongst the more modern Persians: for the ingenious Mr. Daniel has favoured me with a sketch of part of a tomb, and with two other sketches from ancient brick buildings in India, where the bricks are coloured on the faces, and, as he says, annealed in the burning; these bricks, which are well burnt, appear very similar to the bricks used by the ancient Romans, much resembling what we call *tiles*.

It is greatly to be wished that the East India directors would give orders for such sufficiently accurate and adequate drawings to be made and published of whatever is remaining, which might elucidate the ancient knowledge and arts of the Hindoos. Certain matters might even be moulded off. How admirable would such a collection accompany the *Asiatic Researches*, and whilst (differently from most other books) it would communicate information that could not mislead, it would comport well with the whole truth of things, whenever that truth might be discovered. To us at a distance the satisfaction would be infinite, as we should enjoy the certainty of never having occasion to unlearn any part of the information that such a collection of etchings would communicate; and even those gentlemen on the spot in India who may be laudably employing any attention to this inquiry, would find the greatest conceivable advantage in having always at their elbow the entire collection, which, as in all other similar researches, affords the best guide for the elucidation of each particular.

There are many curious particulars respecting general knowledge, which might be ascertained by a better acquaintance with the antiquities of India. The heads from Elephantis (which are in the hall of the British Museum) appear neither to be Hindoo workmanship, nor any representation of the character of the Hindoo people. The hair, and other characteristic particulars, show a strong resemblance of the Egyptian, or rather the African Isis, of which two specimens may be seen in Dr. Hunter's Museum; and the head of the Sphinx, which I remember

seen at Rome and in other places) that the Egyptians, much as they had practised in the art, yet never rose to any per-

having drawn in the courtile of the Belvidere at Rome, is more of the Negro character than of the Egyptian or any Asiatic people. The fine, loose, and almost masterly fragment of a large hand, and the body of a child, also from Elephantis, now in Mr. Townley's hall, are of a much higher, and of altogether a different gusto from the piece of *real* Hindoo sculpture in the same hall. The large head of Isis at Lansdown-house, as all the other, particularly the finest heads of Isis that I have seen, differ evidently from the European and Asiatic character and cast of features, and seem to intimate the idea as of African or Ethiopian original; whether this idea was taken from their neighbours, the Macrobian Ethiopians, or from those in the eastern or western extremities of Africa. Whoever these famed Ethiopians were who left such a venerated impression on their Egyptian disciples—disciples who were themselves so deservedly celebrated for their own wisdom and ingenuity —who or whatever these Ethiopians were, whether white or black, they must have been identically of the same exterior figure with the Negroes of this day, as those heads of Isis might very well pass for a good artist-like representation of that degraded people.

However shocking, it is useful for us to know to what a calamitous state nations may be reduced by an estrangement from a just sense of their dependence on God; to which is owing whatever is dignified and valuable in human nature: and how, by a long course of idolatrous and progressive degradation, men descend at last to the condition of mere beasts, not able to raise their ideas above what is called the Dii Fetiches, reptile gods; as is the case of so great a part of those poor Africans, whom perhaps we must acknowledge to be the descendants of those blameless Ethiopians bordering on the ocean, according to Strabo, the Southern Ocean, and whom, according to Homer, the gods annually visited for twelve days.

Although it be difficult, yet we must on certain occasions restrain our feelings from carrying us too far into digressions from the immediate object of our inquiries, namely, the mere matter of the antiquity and the state of the arts, as far as we find authorities either from ancient records or existing monuments; and so far we are warranted to identify the Negro race with the very ancient Ethiopian models of the Egyptian Isis, &c. Time, and its attendant vicissitudes, effect strange things. But however it be, according to Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus, these ancient Ethiopians, who acted so important a part in the history of early arts and knowledge, inhabited that part of Lybia which lies upon the Southern Sea, that is to say, south of the Mediterranean, or on the south side of Africa, and were, according to the testimony o these writers, so practised in the arts, as to make hollow statues, resembling their dead relations; whose bodies were contained within those statues, which were of gold, silver, or terra cotta, burnt earth, according to the opulence of the possessor; and enclosed the whole in chrystal or glass cases. It is not mentioned in Diodorus whether these statues in gold and silver were

fection above that of practical mechanical conduct. They carved the human figure, male and female, in materials the

cast from moulds formed on clay models, or whether they were hammered out and chased from thin metallic plating, as was the fact in some of the early Greek statues; but whichever way we consider it, even the terra cottas, with the power of representing the peculiar difference by which each individual was discriminated from the others, argues a high degree of cultivation; and the more, if we add from Herodotus, that when these Ethiopians had dried the dead body after the Egyptian fashion, or some other way, they laid on a covering of white plaster, which they painted with colours as near as possible to the likeness of the person deceased.

This process, both as to the material of white plaster, and the colours afterwards employed, is actually the same with the process adopted on the painted case, which contains the Egyptian mummy at Dr. Hunter's museum, and those at the British Museum. But as Herodotus does not mention any covering of linen over the Ethiopian dried bodies, it would seem as if the coating of plaster on which they painted was laid immediately on the dead body. Here appears some mistake, or at least some difficulty: but however it might have been, it manifests such high pretensions to knowledge, as would comport well with what these Ethiopians affirmed of themselves, namely, that they were the first institutors of religious rites (perhaps idolatrous rites), and that the gods, in reward for their piety, never permitted them to fall under the yoke of any foreign prince. In effect, says Diodorus, they have always preserved their liberty by the great union which has always subsisted amongst them; and many most powerful princes, who had attempted to subjugate them, have failed in the enterprise. Cambyses, after his conquest of Egypt, coming to attack them with numerous troops, his army perished, and his own life was saved with great risk. Semiramis, that queen whose ability and exploits have rendered her so famous, had scarcely entered Ethiopia, when she found that her design could not be carried into effect. Bacchus and Hercules, who had traversed the entire earth, abstained from warring only with the Ethiopians, whether from the fear of their power, or from the veneration which they had for their piety.

The Ethiopians (continues Diodorus) say, that the Egyptians are one of their colonies, which was led by Osiris into Egypt. They even pretend that the country was in the beginning only a sea, but that the mud brought down by the Nile from Ethiopia had settled and made it a part of the continent, and that all Egypt was the work of that river; and they add, that the Egyptians derived from them, as their authors and ancestors, the greatest part of their laws, and (which I wish you particularly to note, as we shall advert to it shortly) that it was from them they learned to honour their kings as gods, and to bury their dead with so much pomp; and that sculpture and writing, as well in the hieroglyphic as the common characters, had their birth among the Ethiopians. So far Diodorus Siculus, respecting this ancient people, who thus appear

most durable and difficult to be wrought, in porphyry, granite, and in basalt; but they neither did, nor, as it should

to have been the great originals and disseminators of whatever knowledge was in Egypt.

As in this place we are not any further concerned with the matters of antiquity than just to follow up in a cursory manner whatever memorable traces may be yet remaining of the most ancient arts and knowledge, it will be sufficient to observe, that even these Ethiopian predecessors of the Egyptians seem themselves to have derived their knowledge from a still more ancient people — from the Atlantides, those Titanic descendants of Ouranus, whose celebrity is unfortunately but too conspicuous in the ancient poets and historians; and who left their names so inscribed or identified with the sun, planets, and the other constellations of our hemisphere, as to give an additional turpitude and malignity to Sabaism, or idolatrous stellar worship, which was already so reprobated in the book of Job, and the other prophetical writings, under the odious appellation of the host of heaven. Diodorus informs us, that "the first Egyptians regarded the sun and the moon as the two principal and eternal divinities; that these were the gods who governed the world, and occasioned the vicissitudes of the seasons, and contributed to the generation of the subaltern beings and elementary substances. Besides these heavenly and immortal gods, there were also, according to them, terrestrial gods, born mortal, who from their own wisdom, and from the benefits they had conferred on mankind, obtained immortality.

Some of these were kings in Egypt; and of these kings, some of them had names in common with certain gods: as Helius or the Sun. Saturn, Rhea, Jupiter, which some call Ammon, Juno, Vulcan, Vesta, and Mercury. These royal, deified personages, so important in the history of Egypt, and which appear to have given a beginning to that history, were not of Egyptian but of Titanic origin, and were part of the wrecks of that Atlantic people, whose country (according to the Egyptian account mentioned in Plato) was submerged by an inundation of that ocean, which, probably from the circumstance, was called the Atlantic.

For some time past the attention of the literati has been much employed in endeavouring to recover whatever might be known on this subject, particularly the learned and very accomplished M. Baillie, who, in discussing some ill-founded conjectures of Voltaire (in his Lettres sur l'Atlantide, and also in his history of astronomy), has brought forward a great deal of curious and important matter; but whether from his not designing to follow the more obvious route, or from his desire of aiding the system of his ingenious friend Buffon, he appears to have unluckily gone out of his way; however, the facts which he discovered and united, have completely enabled his successor on the subject, Count Carli, to dissipate the literary mist which obscured and prevented our discovering that the real situation of the country of these Atlantic or Titanic people was really that pointed out in the relation of the Egyptian priests, and in the concurrent general traditions. It is this very identical situation, which only could have enabled them to have left those Astronomical

seem, intended to do any thing more. Their figures appear neither to act nor think, and have more the resemblance of

and other usages in South America, which the ingenious and learned Count Carli has so well identified with what they disseminated on the continents of our hemisphere.

By what we may gather from Diodorus Siculus, this people came from the ocean into the western parts of Africa, were a maritime, knowing, most civilised people, compared with the other inhabitants; and he quotes Homer, and might have quoted Hesiod, Sanchoniathon, and others, to show that the gods were descended from them; and that their first king, Cœlum, governed the greatest part of the world, especially towards the west and north; and that the planets, and many of the constellations, have been named after some of his descendants. What ideas were anciently entertained of their mightiness and power, may be inferred even from the triumphal ejaculations of Judith, ch. xvi., where she exultingly sings, that Holophernes was not smote by the sons of the Titans, nor by high giants, but by Judith, the daughter of Merari.

The deification of Ouranus, Saturn, Jupiter, and the other mortals, by the transfer and identifying of them with the heavens, the sun, and planets, was probably posterior to the catastrophe of the inundation, which cut off the communication with America; and this planetary nomenclature became therefore unknown to the Americans, and was only coextended with the influence of these Titans, in the countries not very remote from Africa and the Mediterranean, which enabled this wandering, Pelasgian, maritime people, to extend themselves in Tuscany, Tyrrhenia, Lydia, Phrygia, and the countries of Greece and Samothracia; to institute the oracle of Pelasgian, Dodonean Jove in Thessaly, and that of Ammonian Jupiter in the Oasis of the sandy deserts of Lybia. In the Arcadis of Pausanias, Cecrops is said to have been the first who deified Jupiter, although he prohibited any living thing to be sacrificed on the occasion, contenting himself with the offering those horned cakes of bread, called *Bous*: whilst Lycaon, with bloody and inhuman hands, immolated a child to Jupiter Lyceus, and in the midst of the sacrifice was said to have been turned into a wolf as a punishment; and that the god and his suppliant were cotemporaries, appears by Jupiter's amour with Calista, the daughter of this Lycaon.

It should seem also by Jupiter's conduct in this story, as told by Ovid and Pausanias, as well as by the offerings occurring in the hymns ascribed to Orpheus, that Jupiter, as far as his power reached, was humanely instrumental in suppressing that horrid and widely extended custom of immolating human victims, and was contented that idolatry should not be extended further than to the worship of the regal family, and the example that he himself set by the altar and offerings to his grandfather Ouranus. (See the fragment of Diodorus preserved in Eusebius.)

The Ethiopians, to prevent the abuses of so much regal power, wisely provided that their kings should be elected out of the best of the sacerdotal or learned order, and under the control of its laws; and the usages of their

dead than of animated nature. They have observed the general proportions in a gross and general way, not only

Egyptian descendants, being much under the direction of the same literate and very numerous body, which formed an aristocracy in the true sense of the word, it being composed of those who were best educated; it consequently followed, that the public energies, seldom belligerous, were generally directed to objects of public utility and pacific, graceful enjoyment; the very vestiges of which are the admiration of all enlightened travellers even at this day. But, in all countries and times where this wise check was wanting, and every thing was exposed to the outrages of inflated, deified cupidity, and its execrable instruments; such is the nature of man, so prone to corruption, that it was to be expected that this cursed Titanic example of deifying regal families would be imitated by others, in the excesses of their pride and power; and we may judge of the horrid extent to which it was carried by the mandate of the Assyrian king, Nebuchodonozor "to avenge himself on all the earth, to destroy all flesh, that did not obey the commandment of his mouth, to cast down their frontiers, and cut down their groves, for he had decreed to destroy all the gods of the land: that all nations should worship Nebuchodonozor only, and that all tongues and tribes should call upon him as God." (*Judith*, ch. i. 2.) "And who is god but Nebuchodonozor." (vi. 2.) When we reflect upon this horrid state of things, resulting from the gradual and accumulating corruptions of sabaism or stellar worship, identified with these dead and living mortals, which had been thus superinduced on the primitive, traditional, pure theology, it affords a most dreadful exemplary spectacle of degraded (and perhaps in these matters impotent) human reason; and of the deep indelible stain it has imprinted on so many nations of the ancient world, who in other respects were so much celebrated for their genius and skill.

The world was happily and mercifully delivered from all this servile, idolatrous worship of deified men, and the material agents of nature, by the glorious mission of Moses, whose truly sublime doctrine, and admirable polity were so happily calculated to exalt human nature to its destined real dignity, by a just emancipation from all other dependence than that on its Divine Creator, and the just and equal laws. He had prescribed for their good government, and for perfectionating human nature. All these matters duly considered, we ought not to be surprised if this grand exemplary code, which stood like a cheering light, a great beacon in the ancient world, discovering the extreme turpitude of its degrading idolatries, was regarded as an object of terror and hatred by Nebuchodonozor, Antiochus, Claudius, and other such impious tyrants, nursed up and fed with base adulation; and who, as inheritors and claimants of the same terrestrial and celestial domination, were necessarily determined to uphold all this idol business, to immolate its opposers, and to trample under the feet of their mercenary, pretorian janissary instruments, every right of equal, common humanity, mental and corporeal.

The removing and fulminating this degrading and mischievous mass of slavish idolatry, which had been so impiously placed between human

without selection, beauty, or discrimination of character, but even without attending to that detail of parts, which to

nature and its Almighty Creator, Conservator, and Judge, was a *grand object*, which in the legislation of Moses is never out of view: and it is peculiarly interesting to us, as painters and sculptors, in this academy, to observe, that it was this grand circumstance in the Mosaical code, which affords the natural and only true explication of the second commandment in the Decalogue, which has been (in these countries more especially) so iconoclastically explained, as to be ruinous and subversive of the higher departments of art, both in painting and sculpture.

Idols, idols in the likeness of any thing celestial, terrestrial, or aquatic, the making of these idols, and placing them in lieu of Almighty God, as divine objects for adoration; this, and this only, is what the commandment prohibits, and fulminates with such tremendous consequences. If the word idol, in this sense, had been put instead of the word image, in the translations of our Bibles, we might have rested perfectly satisfied, that neither Almighty God, nor his servant Moses, had any intention of prohibiting the true religion from the use and exercise of this most universal of all languages — the language of forms, read instantly by the eye, in all those energies of painting and sculpture, which no words can communicate; and accordingly we find, in their best and most pious times, the Jews practised the art as far as they were able, and availed themselves of the use of it in the service of religion. Under the eye of Moses himself, Bezaleel and Aholiah made the two cherubims spreading their wings over the ark of the covenant on the mercy-seat, where God resided in the sanctum sanctorum; and the sacred veil and the curtains, which surrounded the holy of holies, were also ornamented with tapestry, or embroidered paintings of the same figures of cherubims, which were sculptured on the ends of the mercy-seat; thus surrounding, as it were, the invisible God with a visible heavenly choir, both in painting and sculpture. And afterwards, when the temple came to be built, the cherubims, which were placed all round it, and the brass figures of the lions, and the twelve oxen cast in the clayey soil near Jordan, demonstrate incontrovertibly the compatibility of the second commandment with the making of mere images and representations of any thing either spiritual or terrestrial; and that the crime committed by Aaron and the other Israelites in the desert, was not in making a molten calf, but in making and worshiping the idol, Apis (probably the Jupiter Ammon or Serapis of the Atlantides), as the God who had brought them out of the bondage of Egypt.

As the necessary reconciling the command respecting the prohibition of idols with that respecting the setting up of those images both painted and carved, and in the most holy places, is easy, obvious, and will sufficiently remove out of our way all absurd iconoclastic and fanatical prejudices to the making of these or any other mere images, I shall close this part, respecting those more early nations, by observing, that although nothing can be affirmed as to the merit of those works of painting or sculpture of the Chaldeans, Ethiopians, and Hebrew people, yet

an intelligent eye is no less observable in each particular member, even in the positions of inaction and rest, which they had chosen to represent. Ingenious writers ascribe this defect to their want of being skilled in the science of anatomy, which their great respect for the dead did not permit them to cultivate: but they must have been equally averse from inspecting and studying the living body, since they could no where find any person, who was not very bloated and formless indeed, where a much greater variety of figure, and detail of parts, was not too obvious to be overlooked. However, this fault is less palpable in figures at rest, and in female figures, than in the male.*

The profile figures painted on their mummies in the British Museum are drawn in the same inaccurate way with the figures in low relief, which are carved on their obelisks. The eye, but half of which can be seen in profile, is notwithstanding drawn at full length, the same as it would appear in a front view.† An example of this may be seen in

it is evident, that at least the mechanical knowledge and practice of the arts were then much exercised, particularly in Chaldea and Ethiopia.[1]

* The art of Egypt was not *imitative*, but conventional and representative. The occupation of the Egyptian artist was hereditary, and all the forms, proportions, and attitudes of his figures were prescribed and inviolable. — W.

† The most comprehensive view of Egyptian art is given in the plates to Rosellini's great work on Egypt. — *Monumenti dell' Egitto e della Nubia.* The collection of Egyptian Antiquities in the British Museum is also now quite adequate to satisfy the demands of the student on this subject; and he cannot have a better guide to the collection than the *Egyptian Antiquities* by Mr. Long, published by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge. — W.

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[1] As the matter of this long note is collateral only to the subject of discourse, it is unnecessary to lengthen it by further comment or detail. The reader will find a general outline of the history of Asiatic and Egyptian art in the Editor's *Epocs of Painting Characterised*, chs. i.–iv., and many interesting details respecting Assyrian remains in particular, in Sir R. Kerr Porter's *Travels in Georgia, Persia*, &c. The author's view as to the Mosaic prohibition with regard to the practice of the imitative arts appears to be correct; it might be corroborated by many passages in Scripture. The arts of the Jews must have been identical with those of the Egyptians, at the Exodus: almost every description of artist, except the painter, is mentioned in the Mosaic books. — W.

the sphinx we have in the Academy, which was moulded from the Egyptian obelisk in the Campus Martius at Rome. It is worth observing, that the body, thighs, and legs of this sphinx, and, indeed, all their representations of insects and animals, are much more accurately and scientifically executed than their human figures.

A further confirmation of their ignorance of the true principles of drawing may be seen in the kneeling figure of the large Egyptian fragment preserved in the hall of the British Museum, where, amongst other errors, is this of the profile eye.

On the whole, the Egyptian figures in the round are the least defective of their performances, as the common mensuration of the parts was here sufficient to prevent them from straying into gross errors; but for their figures in profile, three quarters, and in all situations which require skill in drawing and a knowledge of the true principles of the art, they are almost in the same rude and defective state as the first Grecian, British, and other coins, the intaglio or engrailed figures on our Gothic tombs, and the uncultivated drawings of boys at school, which are faulty in the same particulars.*

Reasons have been given, why the Egyptians were never able to advance beyond this unformed, gross, and limited style of early art, as other nations had done. It has been said that the nature of their country was unfit to furnish ideas of perfection or beauty; that their religion did not allow the artists to depart from the established form of their idols, and that the profession of arts (not being sufficiently honoured by the state)was practised only by those who were themselves too ignorant and uncultivated to produce any thing which was not gross and ordinary. The first of those reasons, respecting the mere form of the Egyptians, has, I am convinced, no foundation in fact: the others must be partly admitted. But it appears to me that the great and insurmountable obstruction to their advancement in art arose out of the character and materials of their religion, wrapt up as it was in a continued allegory (and of the most unfavourable kind), where nothing was shown for itself, but

* The faults of Egyptian sculpture are, as already stated, not those of *perception* but of *convention*. — W.

as the symbol and type of some other thing, a practice that must soon be in opposition, and even in direct contradiction, to the very essence and destination of art.

Many of the Egyptian figures, partly human, partly brutal, were perhaps appositely enough contrived, as a kind of symbolical writing, for the pointing out some necessary rural, domestic, or other observances. These figures being more durable than the notions and mode of combining ideas, which gave rise to them, it is not difficult to conceive how in the course of mundane revolutions, these symbols were no longer considered as such, but as the images and representations of supernatural beings. But by whatever means these figures obtained places in the Egyptian ritual, nothing could be more subversive of all advancement and of truly elevated art, than fabricating ideal works with allegoric and emblematic materials.

To express any divine power, to clothe, to personify the ideas of majesty, of terror, of beneficence, is not to be done either by a mixture of forms, or by a multiplication of parts. The lion's, the ox's, dog's, or elephant's head, raised upon the human shoulders, would appear no less retrograde, and shocking to the principles of true taste, than the hundred hands or heads issuing from the single body of Briareus, or any other monster.

All that could be reached by such a procedure was the merely indicating a conceit with its detailed circumstances. But the perfection of form, the pursuit of sublimity, beauty, grace, or any other of those valuable qualities which *perfect* art, by calling forth the great exertions and ultimate vigour of the artist, had nothing to do in this mode of procedure, any more than in alphabetic writing, where a very extraordinary perfection of the characters is needless, as it would add nothing to the sense.

It is then not to be wondered at, that the arts remained so long in a stagnant and torpid state; and that after ages of dull labour, Plato, when he was in Egypt, could discover no difference either for better or worse, between their earlier and their later works.*

* Plato himself (*De Leg.* ii. p. 656.) explains the reason of this similarity. He says that painters and sculptors were forbidden to introduce any change or innovation into the practice of their respective arts, and

Thus the arts in Egypt, early turned out of their natural channel, were deprived of every invigorating and expansive principle, and forced into such a pursuit of conceits and uninteresting allegory, as utterly blighted all their future prospects.

As the Assyrians, Egyptians, Phenicians, Persians, and the other oriental nations, had cultivated the arts long before the Greeks, we cannot suppose the latter to have been utter strangers to this previous cultivation of their history: the various knowledges they occasionally received and imported, prove the contrary. Orpheus, Homer, Thales, Pythagoras, Solon, and all their earlier travellers, had time for observation and reflection, as they did not go post through the countries they visited. Athens was founded by an Egyptian, consequently, when the Greeks commenced painters and sculptors, at least all the rudiments of the art, the knowledge of the materials, and the methods of using them in painting, modelling, carving, and foundery, were already discovered, and provided to their hands, by their more ancient neighbours.

We must then reject as fabulous, and as a piece of national vanity, a great part of the early accounts of the progressional discovery of the art in Greece, the finding out the method of drawing the profile by tracing its shadow, the adding a colour to it in the next generation, and a number of other successional particulars by which this people would arrogate the original discovery of the whole art to themselves.

No such beginnings are traceable (however plausible), either amongst the Greeks, or even amongst their beforementioned predecessors. So far from finding indications of a beginning in any of those countries, we are (even in the most early periods) struck with an appearance quite the reverse. Very complex usages of art appear to have been then reduced to certain rules of mechanical general practice; whilst all knowledge and memory of the first principles and more simple methods, which must unquestionably have preceded, and served as the basis of these more refined and complex usages, seem to have been utterly obliterated and lost. Can

that thus there was no visible difference between the works which were executed in his own day and those which, according to the traditions of the priests, had been executed ten thousand years before. — W.

any one doubt but that the idea of vitrifying coloured objects upon the face of brick walls, so as to prevent their being obliterated by the weather and other accidents, must be subsequent to the more perishable, though less complex method of delineating those objects with simple colours? and will not this reasoning hold equally true with respect to the sculptures or paintings, or both, which were embossed, inlaid, or enamelled in differently coloured metals, as in the famous tablature of Isis*, which is yet remaining, and examples of which Homer must have seen, to have furnished him with the materials of his idea for the ornaments of the shield of Achilles? Also the historical and other tapestry works of the Sidonian and Grecian women could never have originated but in the idea of imitating paintings in the more simple way, effected with pencil and colours.

It is very remarkable that Homer, who speaks of these annealed and tapestry works, and who was so jealous to let no curious knowledge escape that might enrich and give an additional interest to his poems, has, notwithstanding, not the least allusion to any work of that antecedent, more perfect, and more simple art, which must have furnished original exemplars to the first people who undertook those tapestries and enamelled or inlaid works.

Although our tapestry workers at present do nothing excellent without a painted exemplar, yet it is easy to conceive that the idea of imitation, and the method of working in this way, being once established, mere mechanical practice may perpetuate and convey rude and less perfect essays of this mode of imitation to aftertimes, when the original principles of art, and the idea of antecedent exemplars may have been lost and blotted out of the memory of men.†

* Now in the museum of Turin; but it is supposed to be of the Roman period. — W.

† The most remarkable work of ancient embroidery, is a purple shawl, noticed by Aristotle, which belonged to a citizen of Sybaris. It was the property of Alcisthenes, a native of Sybaris, in the sixth century before the Christian era, and appears to have been an ordinary woollen shawl, in size and all other respects, save the extraordinary nature of its embroidery. This embroidery consisted in representations of cities, of gods, and of men, including a portrait of Alcisthenes himself. The representations of the cities appear to have been human impersonations. Above was a representation of the city of Susa, below which were

Something similar to this appears to be the actual fact with respect even to the paintings of the Egyptians, Gentoos, and Chinese. Copying nature, in our sense of the phrase, seems to be no part of the intention of their artists. The principles on which they worked could never have led them to what they have done. Their art (sufficient indeed for the purpose intended) was but a loose mechanical abridgment and succedaneum of the other more entire, principled, and more perfect art from whence only it could have arisen. Actuated by mere blind practice alone, they appear to have worked after traditionary recipes, which were transmitted from one generation to another, without any solicitude after other improvement or perfection than, perhaps, in the purity or beauty of the mere materials. But as the truth of this observation will be still further elucidated by what we shall hereafter have occasion to observe in speaking of the component parts of the art, I shall close this inquiry into the antiquity of art by remarking that when the time, the establishments, the knowledges, original beginnings, and progressional practice which must necessarily have preceded the state in which we have found the art in Egypt, Chaldea, and the other oriental nations, be fully considered, it will be difficult to reconcile this aggregate of things with the duration and circumstances of any known people existing in that period of time between Abraham and Noah. To me these broken, unconnected knowledges seem to carry evident marks of being really the wrecks and vestiges which might have been preserved after such a general catastrophe as the Deluge; or, rather, a deluge sufficiently universal to have destroyed those countries which could have furnished us with the clue.*

figures of Persians; in the middle were Jupiter, Juno, Themis, Minerva, Apollo, and Aphrodite; on one side was the impersonation of Sybaris, on the other the portrait of Alcisthenes. This shawl came afterwards into the possession of the elder Dionysius of Syracuse, who sold it to the Carthagenians for the enormous sum of 120 talents, nearly 30,000*l* sterling. — Aristotle, *De mirab. Auscult.* c. 99.; Schweighäuser, *Animadv. in Athen.* vol. xi. p. 477. — W.

* There is no need to lay any great stress upon the received computations of those early periods of time, the *precise time* when the Deluge took place; whether it was universal at the same time, and other particulars of the Jewish history and chronology before the calling of Abraham, and the difficulty of reconciling these with the known state of arts and nations. It will not be from our purpose to read here a few passages from

However it fared with other classes of men in the East, we are told that the Bramins, Mandarins, and priests enjoyed a

Père Simon's very valuable critical history of the Old Testament, which go to show that Revelation is not concerned in those difficulties. In page 54. he observes: "We may likewise apply to the books of Genesis what we have already said touching the manner of the registering the public acts in the time of Moses. These books contain the creation of the world, and many things which happened many ages before him; and in all Genesis there is no observation of God's dictating to Moses what is there related. It is not likewise said that he writ by the spirit of prophecy. But all these histories and genealogies are simply related, as if Moses had taken them from some authentic books, or else had had a constant tradition."

Page 116., speaking of the use Josephus made of the Old Testament, the good father says, — "It is true that the books of the Bible are only abbreviated collections from ancient records, which were more large; but particular persons are not, for all that, permitted to add, upon their own authority, or change never so little;" — and book ii. p. 28., refuting an objection of Vossius to the Hebrew text, he says, "It is true, and we have already proved it, that we cannot wholly rely upon the present Hebrew text in the making an exact chronology; but we have shown at the same time, that neither the Greek Septuagint translation, nor the Hebrew Samaritan text, nor Josephus, nor, in a word, all the chronology we have of the Bible, is sufficient to give us an exact account of the ages which have passed since the creation of the world. There are many vacant spaces, as I have already observed, in the chronology of the Scripture, which usually abridge things, to treat only of those which relate to the matter in hand. We shall not, therefore, accuse the Jews for having corrupted their chronology out of design; but we may say, that in many places the Scripture is only a bare abridgment:" and a little after he add, "Nevertheless I agree with Vossius, that it is impossible to make an exact chronology from the books of Holy Scripture as it is at present, and that we are necessarily to have recourse for that to the profane authors, because the holy writers relate only what is necessary for their design."

So much is inserted here from this reverend and very learned father, as I could not profess to lay aside the vulgar, and commonly received chronology preceding the time of the calling of Abraham, and the foundation of the empire of Nineveh and Babylon, and to insinuate, as I have done, the necessity of a greater space of time, in order to correspond with the circumstances recorded, with the conquests made, the yoke long imposed, and first thrown off in the outset of the Assyrian empire, and, above all, with the state of the arts in those early periods. I could not allow myself to advert to these, without at the same time satisfying my hearers that such allowance did not militate with what was contended for by the sincerest and soundest of advocates for revealed religion. Far be it from me to insinuate any thing tending to lessen the influence of that religion; persuaded as I am, that fairly and rightly used, it indubitably affords the best and most generally practicable means of com-

state of freedom above all tyrannical control, and were in possession of whatever education and knowledge then existed. If the practice of the arts had been carried on by these men in their several countries, something might have been expected — some vigour of mind, pursuit of principles, and moral pertinence would, sooner or later, have found their way into their works. But as the direct contrary was the fact, no extraordinary exertions could be hoped for from the debased and enslaved orders or casts of men, who possessed no feeling of human dignity, or sense of natural equality. Artists in such a wretched state, thus robbed of their mental faculties, may be able, however, to practise mechanically, and to transmit, as these have done, a deposit of usages and methods of practice from one generation to another, but it would be vain to expect any thing farther.

From this torpid and worthless state, the arts were happily relieved on being transplanted into the Grecian republics, where all those baneful obstructions to their growth and perfection had no influence. Here were no degrading and vile distinctions of tyrants and slaves, which are ever infallibly sure to render both abominable and useless.

Amongst the Greeks the best man, and the most highly honoured by the public, was he who could manifest the greatest personal worth and the most superior ability. All were invited to a competition, where whatever was truly excellent in nature, in conduct, and in arts; whatever was great, admirable, graceful, and becoming; whatever could tend to give the utmost degree of finish, and completeness to the human character, was the object of general admiration.

To this end, all the abilities and faculties of man were, with the most indefatigable industry, employed in all the

bating those formidable terrors and allurements, which so often obstruct human nature in its progress to destined perfection; and which, even in the very arts that imitate this nature, are ever found proportionably debased and worthless, according as their author is held in vassalage by those degrading, contaminating motives, which unhappily induce but too many to sacrifice the dignity and glory of art to the paltry convenience or emolument of the artist; and, worst of all, those who may want either capacity or inclination to make the choice of Hercules (that is, to prefer glorious duty to servile interest) will, by getting rid of conscience, have nothing to hinder them from becoming ductile and manageable instruments in the service of wrong.

various pursuits of knowledge. The philosopher, the poet, the sculptor, and the painter went hand in hand, mutually enlightening and perfecting each other; and the collision of all these noble emulations could not fail of producing with the public at large the most highly cultivated and expansive mode of thinking.

The artist then, whether painter, poet, or philosopher, had every thing to stimulate and to help him forward; and he whose superior abilities could attract the attention and admiration of such fellow citizens must, indeed, be highly deserving the rewards, the statues, and the honourable decrees which he obtained.

The manly philosophy of Socrates, which infused so much public spirit, and such a love of virtue and liberty; which produced so many heroes, patriots, brave and worthy men; afforded also the noblest and best adapted foundation for authors and artists of a sublime and daring genius. Laborious and self-denying, it looked with a becoming contempt on mere riches, dignities, and all those showy, pompous exteriors which are calculated to encumber, to divert the attention from matters of real value, and only to dazzle those vulgar eyes which have not strength and penetration enough to discover their comparative wretchedness and little worth. To arrive at the utmost extent of the human capacity was the generous, the prime object of Grecian attention; and, accordingly, the illustrious works which this people have produced, are universally acknowledged to be not only the standard and ultimatum in their several kinds, but also to be in a great measure the prime cause of all approximations to perfection ever since.

When the religion of Egypt was imported into Greece by Orpheus, Homer, and others, a great deal of the allegorical part of it — all those mixtures and incongruities of form in their deities — were thrown aside as cumbrous, uninteresting, and disgusting; and although they erroneously converted the attentions and attributes of the Deity into so many distinct beings, yet, as by a stretch of the most admirable and refined fancy, the characters and forms of their several deities were copied after the abstract ideas of whatever was found to be most majestic, most beautiful, graceful, or interesting in human nature. Their artists had a fair opportunity of

introducing as much aptness and perfection as such a system of Polytheism was capable of receiving. To obtain this, they were necessarily led into the most attentive investigation of general nature for the culling out all those several perfections, male and female, that were particularly adapted to each walk of character. This is the *ideal* of art, the fair, legitimate offspring of that perfect in nature, the sense of which is more or less congenial to all minds, according to the attention bestowed on it. To the pursuit of this ideal, the Grecian arts owe all that perfection which the world has so much admired in them; and if the poets appear to have led the way into it before the painters and sculptors, it was only because the energies of language were easier, more at command, and, as the more immediate offtrack of thought, naturally antecedent to the energies of art.

From the time of Pericles to the end of the age of Alexander, which comprehends a space of about two hundred years, the arts in Greece have been generally considered as at their highest point of excellence Under Pericles, Phidias and his contemporary Parrhasius*, with others, were the introducers of the extraordinary style where the art was raised to the contemplation and imitation of aggregate, instead of individual, nature. Their peculiar excellence appears to have been sublimity, majesty, and characteristic propriety. About the time of Alexander, art seems to have been more remarkable for beauty, grace, and a certain felicity and taste of composition and execution. Though nothing remains of Phidias or his contemporaries, except the basso-rilievos on the frieze of the temple of Minerva at Athens, and, perhaps, a few other such subordinate fragments† (all the greater works both in painting and sculpture having been long since miserably destroyed), yet no intelligent man will ever be inclined to question the extraordinary excellence which has been ascribed to them. Every doubt will be removed when we consider the particulars specified, the universal consent, and

* The more immediate contemporaries of Phidias and Pericles were, Polygnotus, Micon, Dionysius of Colophon, and Phidias's nephew Panaenus. Apollodorus, Zeuxis, and Parrhasius were a generation later, and belong to a more accomplished period. This will be more explicitly shown when we come to Fuseli's Lecture on Ancient Art. — W.

† The Elgin Marbles, now in the British Museum. — W.

the decided judgment of many of those who have given this testimony, and, above all, when we consider the very great excellence of the works which we have remaining, executed by the disciples and successors of those greater artists, in times when the art is said to have been gradually declining and losing its most valuable qualities.

The Athenian coins, either of this or of any other period, afford us no accurate and satisfactory information respecting the comparative state and peculiar perfections of the arts at Athens. Their coins are far from being remarkable for any superior excellence over the other Grecian, or even over the more modern coins. The object generally attended to in a medal or coin, being of too limited and inferior a nature to allow of entering very deeply into the great qualities of art; and in little things, the difference between superior and inferior artists is not very discoverable. The gems and coins of the Roman times, which are not wanting in comparative merit, and that, I had almost said, unequalled head of Lucius Verus, even larger than life, which is at the villa Borghese*, are incontrovertible proofs that people may possess excellence in the inferior and limited matters of art, who are but ill qualified for the greater excellences.

However, it is advisable not (or at least I am not myself inclined) to believe what is said of this decay of art after the age of Alexander, without many limitations, as to its degree and extent.† A people who had enjoyed such a government,

* Now in the Louvre, at Paris. — W.

† Upon the authority of Quintilian (*Inst. Orator.* xii. 10. 3.), painting was considered by the Romans to have flourished chiefly in the age of Alexander and his immediate successors. In the mere mastery of the technical difficulties of the art it doubtless did; but the great period of Grecian art was from Cimon and Pericles to the time of Alexander. Polygnotus of Thasos, who settled in Athens about 460 B. C., established painting in all the essential principles of the art; character, form, and all that is essential in colouring were thoroughly attained by Polygnotus and his contemporaries. In the succeeding generation the art was rendered dramatic, by Apollodorus, Zeuxis, Parrhasius, Timanthes, Eupompus, and their contemporaries. The imitation of the local and accidental appearances of objects was added to the generic or essential style of Polygnotus; character and form were enhanced by the addition of local colour and tone, and dramatic fidelity of composition. The Alexandrian period, which was one only of refinement, did but add variety of method and effect to the already perfect art of the preceding age.

and such an education as the Greeks, where reason and liberty were so exercised, will take a long time before they can be totally corrupted. Whatever new folly and principle of corruption may be in fashion, many will be found who adhere to the old and good maxims, if not from the reasonableness of the thing, yet at least for opposition's sake.

The books written by the artists of antiquity (of which there were many, and by some of the best artists) are all

The great masters of this period were, Pamphilus, Apelles, Protogenes, Euphranor, Nicias, Nicomachus, Aristides, Pausias, and others; in essentials, probably, all more or less equal, yet each striving after distinction by undue attention to one or more of the mere technical qualities of art; thus we find one distinguished for *grace*, another for high finish, a third for facility, others for peculiar effects of light and shade, or bold foreshortening, some for ingenious or novel devices; others again for skilful grouping, and one only, Aristides of Thebes, for expression.

As these mere technical excellences of art were made thus prominent, the higher qualities of art were overlooked by the succeeding generation of artists, and the *form* became paramount over the *essence*, even with the very pupils of these great painters. This is the rapid decline of Grecian art which immediately supervened on the close of the Alexandrian age. A glance at the similar revolution of taste and practice which took place in Italian art in the beginning of the seventeenth century will render this change intelligible. The school of the Carracci, though a partial revival at the time, was, when compared with the Roman and Florentine schools at the commencement of the sixteenth century, just such a transition from *essence* to *form*, from *sentiment* to *sense*, as that which it has been endeavoured to show took place in Grecian art immediately after the period of Alexander.

That the art never revived from this decline is not remarkable. The political revolutions with which Greece was successively convulsed, and the dynastic changes which ensued, until it delapsed into a Roman province, were perhaps sufficient obstacles to any further great efforts in art; the only classes that could encourage it being probably either engrossed by politics or engaged in war. Greece abounded in the treasures of art, handed down to her from the renowned ages; her temples and palaces were crowded with the inestimable works, and the new rulers found the transfer of such productions a more expeditious and less hazardous process of acquisition than the tardy alternative of requiring original productions from contemporary artists. These, therefore, were driven to mere expedients for a livelihood; inferior classes of art became predominant, and *genre*-painters, decorators, caricaturists, and artists of still less worthy pursuits became, with few exceptions, exclusively characteristic of the times. A full account of these several periods of Greek art will be found in the *Epochs of Painting*, already referred to. — W.

perished*, and other authors who were not so practically skilled in the art as to enable them to enter accurately into the discussion of particulars, are never satisfactory; because they are always too vague and too fond of deciding in the lump, as it enables them to conceal their want of skill in discriminating. When the different walks of art have been successfully filled by great men whose reputations have been chronicled and established by time; succeeding artists, though of equal merit, will in the same country be with difficulty allowed the full praise they deserve, especially by the second-hand critics, who generally draw a line of separation between the old occupiers of reputation and the new comers; since it is much easier to repeat the character that is recorded of Phidias, Praxiteles, or Lysippus, than to investigate the merits of an Apollonius or an Agasias. When one examines that unparalleled piece of excellence, the famous *Torso* of the Belvedere (of which we have two casts in the Academy,) it is really astonishing to find that the name of Apollonius, the Athenian, who executed it, is not even once mentioned by any author of antiquity.† But I shall in another place advert more particularly to the merits of this and some other admirable Grecian remains, as affording the best examples of the method of employing the study of nature in a work of imagination.

As to what some affect to observe about a Roman style of sculpture, and the difference between it and the Grecian, I never could discover any solid ground for such a distinction. It appears that under the kings, and in the early times of the republic, the Romans were but little skilled in the arts, as they for the most part availed themselves of the ingenuity of their neighbours, the Etruscans, for whatever statues and public works they wanted to have executed. After the taking

* Pamphilus wrote on *Painting and celebrated Painters;* Euphranor on *Symmetry and Colours;* Melanthius, Apelles, and Protogenes also wrote on *Painting.* Several sculptors likewise wrote upon their art; — many such works are referred to by Pliny, in his compendious history of ancient art in his *Natural History.* Junius gives a list of these and other works in his *Pictura Veterum*, p. 55. edd. Rot. 1694. — W.

† All that is known of him is derived from the inscription on the work: he was a native of Athens, and his father's name was Nestor.—W

and pillage of Syracuse*, Corinth†, and the other Grecian cities, when the Romans became more familiarly acquainted with the excellent productions of art, such works of painting and sculpture as were occasionally executed at Rome were no otherwise Roman than from that circumstance, as they were wrought by Grecian artists, and a few Romans, their disciples and imitators. Better and worse may be found in what they have done, but that is all; the style is the same, and there is less reason for considering the Dying Gladiator as one of the best executed monuments of Roman art, than for believing it to be the performance of some indifferent Grecian artist.

The works of the Etruscans, and of the Greek colonies settled in Campania, would be hardly worth mention here, were it not for their painted vases, which are so far curious, as they may afford some, though a very faint idea of the Grecian painting. The figures on some of those vases are spiritedly and not unskilfully drawn, when we allow for the unavoidably loose inaccurate process of such works; and the taste of design and composition is often exceedingly elegant; but for what I have seen of them, they are all, to the best of my recollection, flat, like the Egyptian pictures, without any relievo of light and shadow. Though different colours are frequently employed in these paintings, yet as there is nothing of that gradation of colour, which is effected by light and shadow, or the different degrees of strength and weakness, each object is of one colour. Whether this be an imitation of the old method of those they called Monoch-

* This was the conquest of Syracuse by Marcellus, 214 B.C. The works of art which were brought to Rome to adorn the triumph of Marcellus were the first productions of Greek art which were publicly exhibited among the Romans, and were the first incentives to that taste for decorating their public buildings with pictures and statues, which led to the subsequent universal spoliation of Greece and Asia of their treasures of art. At first, says Plutarch (*Marcel.* 21.), Marcellus was accused of having corrupted the public morals, since, from the introduction of these works, the Romans wasted much of their time in discoursing about arts and artists. Marcellus, however, boasted, even before Greeks, that he was the first to teach his countrymen to esteem the exquisite productions of Greek art.—W.

† 146 B. C. — W.

romatists*, or whether these vases were executed before any more improved method of painting was known, I shall leave others to determine. But these Etruscans and Campanians being early swallowed up by the Roman government, their progress in the arts was interrupted, and they were afterwards too much engaged in assisting to extend and sustain the conquests of this military people, ever to think about resuming the subject of arts; until this enormous mass of useless destructive power was happily beaten to pieces by the barbarous nations.

It is curious to reflect that the exertions of art seem to arise from the disappointment of the human mind, sated, disgusted, and tired with the monotony of real persons and things which this world affords, so full of imperfection, and accompanied with so much misery, strife, and injustice. In proportion to the serenity and goodness of the mind, it naturally turns away from such a state of things, in search of some other more grateful and consoling; and it has a natural horror of those atheistical cavils, which would malignantly deprive it of all other resource, by mercilessly chaining it down to the scene before it. Hence it arises, that the minds of men in all ages and places where they were at leisure, and happily relieved from the apprehensions of war, tyrannies, and all their horrid train of consequent miseries, have naturally dilated, and found consolation in the objects of religion, which they would anticipate and realise by their endeavours to cut and carve them in blocks of wood or stone; whether detached from their parent rocks, and set up in high and honoured places of frequent resort, or, as was probably the more ancient way, cut into and making part of immense excavations, as is seen in the mountains of India. Whether this subject matter of religion be well or ill reasoned upon in these detailed efforts, whether it be taken from the various incarnations of the Indian Vishn'u, the more elegant forms and ideas of the Greek mythology, or from the more consoling and happily adapted matter which results from the more rational hopes and fears inculcated by the Christian religion; yet the whole together forms an astonishing chain of the most indubitable proof of the thirst of the mind for a more satisfactory state of things, and of

* See Fuseli's First Lecture. —W.

its natural recurrence to the arts of design, as the first, the universal and natural written language, which in furnishing the means of expressing this universal testimony, affords an opportunity of tracing human nature through an immense tract of ages; through India, Egypt, Greece, and Italy: and although whatever was not connected with the religion of those people was not thought of as worth commemorating, yet many other matters and usages are luckily preserved by their incidental connection with the superior matter which otherwise would now be utterly lost to us; and every thing fully considered, what should we have known of the ancient nations, their arts and knowledges, were it not for the stimulus which religion afforded to the human exertions? what other motives ever did or could supply its place?

The deplorable calamities of wars, rapine, and every misery, which for so many centuries deluged Italy during the ambitious contests of rival emperors, elected by the different bands and legions of soldiery; the incursions of the northern barbarians, who destroyed them, and divided the spoil, and the struggles of these, with the succeeding inundations of other northern hordes, equally savage; their long contests in the aggregate masses, and afterwards in the no less mischievous fragments into which they were frittered, left the mind no leisure, but wholly occupied it in contriving for the necessary security of mere bodily existence. However, though late, this fermentation did at last more or less subside into settled governments; and the embers of the arts of design, and indeed all other arts and knowledge which had been providentially kept alive by the monks of the Greek and Latin churches, were again kindled into a flame by people who now felt themselves at ease, and in a condition to cultivate intellectual enjoyments.

In the thirteenth century, John Cimabue, the disciple of a Greek mosaic painter at Florence, was the glorious instrument of the resurrection of the arts of design in Italy; which a happy combination of moral causes had greatly contributed to advance and to perfect.* The Christian religion,

* It may seem invidious to take from the glory of any man, but advanced knowledge has long since shown us that Cimabue is indebted for this high position much more to the circumstance of his being the first painter chronicled by Vasari, than to any extraordinary merit of his own.

which was then universally established, opened a new and large field for the exercise of the arts, in order to provide pictures and statues for their churches, as necessary helps and furtherances to piety, serving at once for books intelligible to the unlettered, and for memorials to assist the recollection, and give fervour to the hearts of those who were better informed: and whenever the works of art have not answered these purposes, it is an abuse to which every, even the best things, are liable, as the fault lies not in the art, but in the artist, or in the employer who suffers the abuse.

From what has been observed respecting the Egyptians, it is very apparent that nothing can be a greater bar and impediment to the advancement and dignified exertion of art, than a mean, grovelling, and contracted disposition in the artist; whether it arises from the political debasement of the rank he fills in society, or from his own sordid and contemptible election in preferring pelf to glory; as under either of these states, men cannot avail themselves of the necessary advantages of education, and give a loose to that noble, heroic spirit, which is the true foundation of original and expansive ability and personal worth. But under the Christian dispensation the successors of Cimabue were fortunately under no influences obstructive to their advancement. Christianity had so elucidated that question about the natural rights and legal equality of mankind, as to make the sullen spirit of absolute tyranny utterly inconsistent with all its

He was preceded by Niccola and Giunta Pisani, Guido of Siena, Buonaventura of Lucca, Margaritone of Arezzo, and some others, little, if at all, inferior to Cimabue himself. Niccola Pisano was a sculptor. The Latin conquest of Constantinople in 1204, and the greater intercourse generally which then arose between the Greeks and Italians, is doubtless one of the principal causes of the comparatively sudden progress of the arts in the thirteenth century. In considering this subject, however, due weight must be given to the two most important discoveries, of gunpowder and printing, which immediately preceded the great revival of the arts, and contributed, indirectly, in various ways, to realise it. The reader will find the connexion between ancient and modern art traced with some detail, in the second and third books of the Editor's *Epochs of Painting*.

Giovanni Cimabue was born at Florence in 1240, and died there, and was buried in the church of Santa Maria del Fiore, — it is not known in what year; but he was still living in 1302. —W.

governments, of whatever form; even the philosophy of Socrates, so creative of exalted worth and ability among the Grecians, was not farther removed from narrow, unproductive selfishness, than the rigid self-denial, philanthropy, beneficence, and unceasing intellectual culture which Christianity so pressingly recommends. Christianity is indeed the perfection of the Socratic doctrine, with elucidations and motives for the performance of them, of which Socrates appears to have had no knowledge.

These are the great and only sources of all admirable and sublime exertions; and therefore if the Italians have not carried some parts of the art to as high a pitch of perfection as the Grecians, other causes, sufficiently obvious, will fully account for it without our foolishly supposing their religion prevented it; and notwithstanding what Shaftesbury, Webb, and other late writers have unwisely and peevishly insinuated to the contrary, yet assuredly Christianity is far from being hostile to genius. There have been too many noble monuments of Christian art executed within the last three centuries, for us to entertain the least doubt of the compatibility of our religion with the highest flights of the imagination; if we be but sufficiently grounded in other matters, in science and general education, the materials of Christianity are capable of any thing. Phidias, Parrhasius, and Apelles knew nothing, which in *our* situation they might not have employed with success.

In the little republic of Florence, which gave birth to so many restorers of science, letters, and arts, painting, sculpture, and architecture were advanced and perfected by the consecutive labours of well-employed artists during the course of almost three hundred years, from Cimabue to Da Vinci, Fra Bartolomeo, and Michelangelo; and it is but justice to observe, that the people of this republic deserve praise for more than they have actually done; for though they filled the churches and great houses of Florence with this progressional art, and consequently had but little space remaining for any monuments of art when it was perfected, the advantage of this more perfect art fell upon easy terms into the hands of the neighbouring states; some part of it, as will be observed, made the foundation for the beautiful

superstructure the Venetian school raised; and all the remainder was carried to Rome by Raphael and Michelangelo, and received no small increase and improvement from the intellectual vigour of the sublime and graceful mediums through which they passed.

Every part of Italy became distinguished for some admirable excellence, which their great artists about this time peculiarly cultivated, and which have since become in some measure the appropriate characteristic of their several schools.

It is certain that Raphael was the greatest painter Italy ever produced, as his great excellence and superiority over the others lay in the sublimer and more admirable parts of the art; notwithstanding that he is inferior to the Greek sculptors in those very particulars: and though the two great leaders of the Venetian and Lombard schools, Titian and Correggio, carried the practice and conduct of colours, chiaroscuro, and the mere imitation of nature, to a much greater degree of perfection, yet the pre-eminence of Raphael is not to be disputed.

The vigour which Raphael disseminated in the Roman school was very transitory, and would have perished with his immediate disciples, but for [Ludovico] Carracci and his scholars, who for some time kept up the credit of sound design, against the meretricious practices of mere base, low imitation, and trite, flimsy, and vague invention, with which the followers of [Michelangelo da] Caravaggio and [the Cavaliere] D'Arpino contended for the vogue.

The state of Parma was too small and too poor to afford the necessary exercise for any native painter after Correggio; however, Parmegiano had in him a good model in the articles of grace and spirituality, and his other countryman, Lanfranco, was much indebted to him for his picturesque composition.

The three Carracci at Bologna had borrowed much from Correggio, and endeavoured to unite his merits with those of the Roman and Venetian schools; and in some of their works, as well as in the works of some of their disciples, this union is effected in a great and respectable degree.*

* See the Sonnet of Agostino on this subject, in Fuseli's Second Lecture. — W.

As the merits of the Venetian school consisted mostly in the mechanical conduct of the art, there has been proportionally less decay in its vigour than in the other schools of Italy.

When the arts were in their highest vigour in Italy, they were imported into France by that lover of ingenuity, Francis I., who laid the foundation of all that glory to which the French nation has so fair and just a claim for what they had done under Louis XIV.

The merits of the Flemish and Dutch schools ought not to be overlooked in this retrospective view of art. The Dutch, it must be confessed, have deviated widely from all the sources of elegance, pathos, and sublimity; induced not only by that sordid disposition, which will ever be epidemic in a country so generally devoted to gain, but still further, from the differences of religion, they had accustomed themselves to look with ridicule and buffoonery on those great subjects, which the Italians executed with the utmost possible sobriety and unction. Although the Hollanders in this procedure ultimately disqualified themselves for serious pursuits in the arts, yet as the human capacity is seldom disappointed, when it will perseveringly apply, I shall, under the divisions of my subject in the subsequent discourses, have occasion to advert to many excellencies, which might be studied with great profit in the works of some distinguished characters in the Dutch school.

As to the pursuits in art of our own people, they have been pretty extensively considered in an inquiry, which I published in 1775, and in a subsequent account, which was intended as a supplement.* I have little to say in addition to what has been there urged. Our religious distractions in the reigns of Charles I. and the succeeding Stuarts, and the (perhaps necessary) party enterprises since, have either for their own furtherance or opposition to their rivals, almost wholly absorbed the public attention, and have been such an occupation to all our leading men and great families, as left the arts but little to expect either from their taste or their munificence.

Patronage and encouragement had on the contrary been

* *An Enquiry into the Real and Imaginary Obstructions to the Acquisition of the Arts in England.* Works, 1809, vol. ii. p. 167. — W.

shamefully wasted in defacing every species of national worth. In the last reign, to use the words of one of the greatest ornaments this country has to boast, "It appears from the report of the secret committee for inquiring into the conduct of Robert Earl of Orford, that no less than fifty thousand, seventy-seven pounds, eighteen shillings, were paid to authors and printers of newspapers, such as Free Britons, Daily Courants, Corncutters' Journals, Gazetteers, and other political papers, between Feb. 10. 1731, and Feb. 10. 1741; which shows the benevolence of one great minister to have expended, for the current dulness of ten years, double the sum which gained Louis XIV. so much honour, during a reign of seventy, in annual pensions to learned men all over Europe."

In such a state of things, it is no wonder that but little can be said of our native predecessors in the art. The le Bruns, Pugets, Audrans, Edelinks, and all the rest of the glorious constellation of great characters, that at so small an expense diffused a lustre over France, equal to any the world had ever known, might, had it been their fortune to have been born in our islands, have withered away without honour, without pension, and without notice.

Under the reign of his present Majesty, our most Gracious Patron, the arts were, in some measure, raised out of that disgraceful obscurity, in which they had been so long buried; and a Royal Academy was instituted under the king's immediate protection, for the purpose of bringing forward that great line of historical, superior art; from the successful prosecution of which only, the king and the public can expect to see its reputation worthy their attention.

Now, whether these gracious intentions of his Majesty, the wishes of the academicians, and the expectations of the public, may be disappointed or not — must entirely result from the generous ardour and unremitting labours of the students themselves. Inability and indolence may find opportunities of sheltering themselves in other employments, where mediocrity is sufferable; and there are many such. The work of a bungling tailor, shoemaker, or such mechanics, may not be wholly without use, provided there be no fault in the stuff; but in the polite arts, the stuff is of little

account, the wisdom and skill of the workman is all and every thing. It may therefore be prudent to consider in time, that the mere reputation of having frequented the schools of the Academy can be but a poor reliance for the man who shall neglect to have made a laborious and good use of them: and what is much worse, experience has long shown how much it is to be feared that the interest which must necessarily be taken by those, who have nothing to traffick with but bad or contracted abilities in art, will unavoidably draw after it the necessity of their becoming disingenuous and bad men. Quackeries, and every species of dishonest, unmanly artifice must be continually recurred to, to recommend themselves, to acquire and to support a temporary reputation, and to pull down and prevent that of their rivals and more able competitors from taking its due course, and answering any national or useful purposes. Such manœuvres may for a time dupe others, but in the end they must recoil back upon their authors, who will eventually find themselves the greatest dupes of all: for be it always remembered, that nothing but truth and real worth can be lasting. These only can be interesting to the world at large; and the things, the actual works, must sooner or later speak for themselves, independently of all other support.

But you, young gentlemen, who possess a noble ambition, and feel yourselves heartily actuated by a love for perfection, you, I hope, will look with a becoming contempt and scorn on the lazy wretchedness of those who, unfaithful to their art, descend to the mean subterfuges of endeavouring to appear what they are not: you will proceed after quite a different manner, and generously relinquish whatever would obstruct the continued and necessary prosecution of your studies to the end. Your studies in the day, whilst you are at home, will be of the same nature with what you are employed about in the schools of the Academy, as your success will depend upon what is done at home under the eye of a skilful master, who will point out to you the proper method of applying what you may learn here, to the purposes of your own original composition.

By thus devoting your whole lives to one uninterrupted pursuit after improvement, both in the theory and practice

of your art, you will in the end do honour to yourselves, by acquiring for your country that superior reputation in the arts also, which it has long since possessed in every thing else.

In the next lecture (God willing) I shall offer to your consideration some remarks on DESIGN.

LECTURE II.—ON DESIGN.

GENTLEMEN,

IN the preceding discourse I laid before you a view of the growth and progress of the arts, in the different ages and nations; and it has evidently appeared through the whole course, and in every stage of this progress, that the same *causes* by which art was advanced or retarded, invigorated or corrupted, were equally operative in advancing or retarding, invigorating or corrupting the mental faculties, in every thing else that was truly valuable and worthy our esteem and praise.

It is a vulgar error, that your art can ever derive any peculiar advantage from corruption and depravity;—quite the reverse; those almost divine faculties of the mind, formed for the pursuit of the amiable, the admirable, and the perfect, which put forth and flourished in the free and intelligent nations, have, under meanness, ignorance, and oppressive tyranny, lain either totally dormant, or were reduced to a mere caput mortuum, divested of everything spiritual, sublime, and interesting.

We shall now direct our attention towards the component parts of the art, beginning with *Design*, as the foundation and chief.

It may be necessary previously to observe, that although in the executive part of the art very little, if anything, remains to be wished for in addition to what has been done by the ingenious men of the two last centuries; yet it is universally acknowledged, by all intelligent people, that there is in the great monuments of Grecian art a strain of

perfection, beauty, and sublimity, far beyond anything the moderns have produced. Endeavouring to account for this indubitable fact, some ingenious writers, of less knowledge than fancy, have enthusiastically supposed, that either the Grecian artists possessed intellects transcending the ordinary measure of modern capacity, or that they formed their works after living originals, of a perfection superior to anything now to be found. The futility of these suppositions I have endeavoured to show in a work*, published some years since, where it appears sufficiently evident, that all this observable superiority of the ancient Greeks over the moderns arose entirely from moral causes, and principally from the advantages of their education — that the arts at their resurrection in Italy were, for the most part, confined to the practice of mechanical, uneducated people, whose objects of pursuit were ordinary and unelevated; but that, on the contrary, the Grecian artists were highly cultivated in their mental faculties, familiarised to the most subtle and refined philosophy, and appear to have considered the whole of created nature, with all its scattered perfections, but as a mere chaos and rude mass of incoherent materials, thrown together by the Great Creator for the exercise of those intellectual faculties he had bestowed upon man,—whom he had impressed with ideas of perfection and a capacity for combining them to a degree, to which individual nature might make some distant approaches, but at which it would never arrive. Hence have been derived all those masterly works of poetry, painting, and sculpture, which have filled the mind with astonishment, instruction, and pleasure; and which will ever remain unequalled by those who do not draw their materials from the same source.

These remains of Grecian perfection are collected in academies and places of study; yet from the mere imitation of them but little can be expected. We must be able to investigate the principles upon which those statues were constructed, and adopt the same mode of study in our own pursuit and imitation of nature, or we labour to no purpose.

But as the doing of this comprehends the very essence of *design*, which is the subject of our inquiry this night, I

* *An Enquiry into the Real and Imaginary Obstructions to the Acquisition of the Arts in England.* — By James Barry, Royal Academician, and Member of the Clementine Academy of Bologna. — *Becket*, 1775.

shall endeavour to trace out the essential principles of design in that common nature, where, though they have been overlooked, they have always existed; and where our own country will furnish us with materials equal to any enjoyed by the Greeks, or by people better than the Greeks, if any such ever were. But as this important matter of design embraces almost all that is intellectual in the art, is intimately associated with, and indeed arises from, the most secret sources of the human mind, and heart, it will be impossible for us to search it too deeply.

By the word *design*, taken in its most comprehensive sense, is understood the *idea, scheme, or conception*, which a workman or artist endeavours to express.

This great genus comprehends all arts whatever. But in the family of the *imitative* arts, the idea, conception, or scheme of the artist can be no otherwise expressed than by an imitation of visible objects, and of the story, action, circumstance, or occasion which unites them together. Design, then, in these arts, is that conception which is expressed by the artificial arrangement and imitation of such natural objects as either *do*, or might *possibly* exist. It is effected in the painter's art by imitating the forms, colours, and proportional arrangement of natural objects. In sculpture, by the imitation of proportion and form only. Architecture, as it copies no natural archetype, cannot be considered as an imitative art in its necessary and essential parts, but in the mere embellishment and ornaments only, where it is obliged to have recourse to the painter's or the sculptor's art.

Imitations (to use the words of one of the most profound and wisest of men) differ from each other in three things; either because in general they imitate with different means; or different objects; or differently, and not in the same manner. Since they who imitate copy living characters, there is a necessity to exhibit us, either better; as we are; or worse. The painter Polygnotus made his pictures handsomer; and Pauson more deformed; but Dionysius copied nature as he found it.* Homer made men better; Cleophon

* Aristotle (*Poetica*, c. 2.). His words are, Πολύγνωτος μὲν κρείττους, Παύσων δε χείρους, Διονύσιος δὲ ὁμοίους ἑίκαζε: "Polygnotus paints men better than they are, Pauson worse, and Dionysius as they are." This was Dionysius of Colophon; Pauson is not otherwise known.—W.

like; whereas Hegemon and Nicocharis made them worse. It may be here worth observing, that in the mere imitation of individual ordinary nature, nothing is required but the skill and accuracy of the eye and hand only: whereas in the imitation with that selection which endeavours to make things better, the exertions of the imagination and judgment (the two highest powers of the mind) are absolutely necessary in order to obtain that consistent, perfect, and extraordinary totality which constitutes the perfection of the art, and upon which only the artist can ground his title to genius, and be considered as the *maker*, *inventor*, or *creator* of his works; for, as Aristotle observes, some pages after the passage above quoted, "It appears plainly that the poet's business is not to speak the things that have happened; but such as might have been, and are possible, according to likelihood and necessity. For the historian and poet differ, not because they write in verse or in prose; but they differ in this, that the former in reality speaks the things that have been; the latter, those which might be. Poetry, therefore, doubtless affords greater scope than history for sublimity and the display of wisdom."

This selection is as indispensably the business of the painter and sculptor, as of the poet. Their several imitations, which are equally intended to display beauty, sublimity, and wisdom, ought to have nothing to do with imperfection and unfitness, either in the choice of the objects themselves, of their several component parts, or in the fable, story, or action in which they are employed.

These admirable qualities of beauty, sublimity, and wisdom, so essentially requisite in the design of a great artist, can only be found in *abstract or general nature;* and when found and united by the skill of the artist, they are easily and with pleasure recognised by all men: for our ideas of the several species of sensible objects, and the generally relative proportion of their component parts with each other, and with the whole together, must necessarily be much more perfect than our own particular ideas can be, respecting those relatives in fleeting and transitory individuals; in other words, we are much better acquainted with man or horse in its general structure, than we can possibly be with respect to the particular or peculiar fabrication of this or that individual

man or horse. When, for instance, we judge of that noble animal the horse, who is not struck with the large, clear, and brisk eye, full of fire, the lean head, large open nostrils, the arched neck, the chest and shoulders well divided and square, the flank and thighs fleshy and thick, large ham, and the shanks sharp, sinewy, and detached? How readily, and how generally do we recognise the contrary qualities as faults,—the dull, muddy, inanimate eye; the heavy head; drooping, hollow neck, thin flanks; and gummy legs!

The excesses and deficiencies in the human form do not escape even the most vulgar observation; their disapprobation, however coarsely, yet is strongly and accurately expressed by the homely phrases of *squabbish and short, slim and tall, the hatchet or the pudding face, rabbit shoulders, pot belly, spindle shanks, knocked or baker knees, club feet, porterlike, tailorlike*, and so forth. These epithets indicate sensations exceedingly complex; and it is well known that in ages less civilised, men were generally nicknamed from excesses and deficiencies much less obvious. In short, general ideas are the first ideas we acquire; we know the species before we know the individual; and children, as Aristotle observes, will call every woman mother for some time.

In all individuals, of every species, there is necessarily a visible tendency to a certain point or form. In this point or form the standard of each species rests. The deviations from this, either by excess or deficiency, are of two kinds: first, deviations indicating a more peculiar adaptation to certain characters of advantage and utility, such as strength, agility, and so forth; even mental as well as corporeal, since they sometimes result from habit and education, as well as from original conformation. In these deviations are to be found those ingredients which, in their composition and union, exhibit the *abstract* or *ideal* perfection in the several classes or species of *character*. The second kind of deviation is that which, having no reference to any thing useful or advantageous, but rather visibly indicating the contrary, as being useless, cumbersome, or deficient, is considered as *deformity*; and this deformity will be always found different in the several individuals, by either not being in the same part, in the same manner, or in the same degree. The points of agreement which indicate the species are, therefore,

many; of difference which indicate the deformity, few. Hence it is that this common tendency to the general form, those characteristic and specific deviations, and those deviations of inutility and deformity are sooner seen, and more extensively observed upon, than has been generally imagined; for it is one thing in children and uneducated people to feel those sensations, and another to speak accurately about what they feel.

The mere animal powers of man are in themselves capable of calculating with great subtilty, and must necessarily chain together a vast number of experiences to perform even the ordinary actions of life. The preserving an equilibrium in an erect posture, the walking and running, stooping and raising, &c., are all progressional in the acquirement, and result from an infinitude of experiences which it is impossible to retrace. In vain should the equilibrist, the tumbler, or the fencer attempt to lay before you these unobserved, though certain calculations by which the peculiar muscles were governed which so accurately concurred in the performance of their several feats. When we reflect on the complication of these and all the other unobserved calculations in human exertions, where the directions and degrees of force, the qualities of the material, and the expected powers and directions of resistance are so accurately and instantaneously combined, it ought to teach us a proper caution not to be too ready to fix limits to what we may call rude, unlettered sensation, especially in matters equally present and interesting to the most vulgar, as well as to the most refined.

Of this kind is the matter now before us respecting the standard or perfect form of our species. Self-love, of which every one participates more or less, must inevitably give a more than ordinary ardour to our critical and discriminating spirit in this matter. We are equally averse from overlooking our own excellence or advantages, or the want of them in others; hence, the comparative ideas of bad, worse, and worst. Good, better, and best are bandied about through all ranks of society, and nothing can be more evident than that every particle of this, even in the most illiterate minds, must unquestionably be referred to a standard. This standard is no otherwise different in the learned and the illiterate but in the degree: they travel together the same road, but the one

perhaps may go farther than the other, according to their faculties and application. This is the true state of all genuine judgment, freed from that impertinence which is called affectation.

In complex objects these judgments appear frequently to differ, but, upon a close examination, this difference will be found to have existed in appearance only, and not in reality; for they mean either not the same things or the same qualities, or the same degree or the same manner of the things. For example, a picture of Michelangelo shall be admired and condemned by different spectators; but there is no difference of judgment: the attention of the one is employed upon what the picture possesses, of the other spectator upon what it wants.

There is a strange passage in one of Lord Bacon's essays respecting this principle of selection from aggregate nature, which is very unworthy his fine and penetrating genius. The passage is as follows: — "In beauty, that of favour is more than that of colour, and that of decent and gracious more than that of favour. That is the best part of beauty which a picture cannot express; no, nor the first sight of the life. There is no excellent beauty that hath not some strangeness in the proportion. A man cannot tell whether Apelles or Albert Dürer were the more trifler; whereof the one would make a personage by geometrical proportions, the other by taking the best parts out of divers faces, to make one excellent.* Such personages, I think, would please nobody but the painter that made them. Not but I think a painter may make a better face than ever was, but he must do it by a kind of felicity, as a musician that maketh an excellent air in music, and not by rule. A man shall see faces that, if you examine them part by part, you shall never find a good; and yet altogether do well."

On this passage I shall just observe, that though it be true

* This observation would apply rather to Zeuxis than Apelles, concerning whom I am not aware of any story to the point. Zeuxis, however, it is well known, selected five of the most beautiful virgins of Croton, in order to paint from them a figure of Helen, for the temple of Juno Lacinia at that place. And from the great renown of this picture throughout the ancient world, the plan adopted by the painter appears to have been eminently successful. — W.

that this *excellent beauty* may (as he observes) have some strangeness in the proportion, yet it does not follow but that this disproportion or strangeness might be happily avoided by a judicious artist, whilst that which is beautiful was alone imitated. As to the faces good only in the whole result, and not in the parts, it is the proportionate arrangement only that pleases, and not the disagreeable particulars. Nature is here, as the Italians feelingly express it, but *ben sbozzata*, well sketched out: adequate finishing is wanting. The business of art is harmoniously to unite the beautiful parts of the former with this beautiful proportionate arrangement of the latter; and if Lord Bacon had understood the subject better, he would have found that it was by this conduct only (which he had unwarily condemned in Apelles) that any true beauty could be produced, which should be no less admirable in its several component parts than in the proportionate and harmonious arrangement of the whole together. As to the possibility of producing any excellence by those *happy dashes* which resemble the musical felicity, they may perhaps, according to the old story of the painted horse, be allowed to effect something in the imitation of froth and bubble, but that is all. However, the ignorance of our admirable Bacon in matters of this kind was very excusable at a time when, from the mistaken notions of religion, all elevated and artist-like exertions were proscribed in his country, where the wretched business of face-painting bounded the national prospect.

Painting being an art which, in its executive part, requires such a long and laborious process, it has unavoidably been oftener exercised by the mere sordid mechanic, divested of intellectual capacity, than by the philosopher and man of a genius for ethical and refined views.

The union of these qualities of intellectual vigour and mechanical laborious assiduity, which it is easy to see can but rarely happen, is, however, absolutely necessary for producing such works as can enable us to make a just estimation of the powers of the art. Lord Bacon, then, whose active and contemplative pursuits could afford him but little occasion for any knowledge of this art, and whose ideas of it could only be drawn from the portraits of Holbein, and such

like miserable exemplars*, was likely enough to fall into the above mistake. He was entirely out of the way of every thing which could have undeceived him — the cartoons of Raphael, his Camera della Segnatura, his Transfiguration, and the other works of the great Italians, he was an utter stranger to; and, above all, the Grecian statues, which would have flashed immediate evidence in his face, it was his fortune never to have seen. Had this truly illustrious man possessed those advantages, his great sagacity would have made a salutary application of the admirable general principles which he has himself laid down respecting one of those imitative arts. Speaking of poetry, he remarks most admirably and justly — "The use of this *fained historie* hath been to give some shadow of satisfaction to the mind of man in those points wherein the nature of things doth denie it, the world being in proportion inferior to the soule: by reason whereof there is agreeable to the spirit of man a more ample greatnesse, a more exact goodnesse, and a more absolute variety than can be found in the nature of things. Therefore, because the acts or events of true historie have not that magnitude which satisfieth the mind of man, poesie faineth acts and events greater and more heroical; because true historie propoundeth the successes and issues of actions not so agreeable to the merits of virtue and vice, therefore poesie fains them more just in retribution, and more according to revealed providence. Because true historie representeth actions more ordinarie and less interchanged, there poesie endueth them with more rarenesse and more unexpected and alternate variations. So as it appeareth that poesie serveth and conferreth to magnanimitie, moralitie, and to delectation. And therefore it was ever thought to have some participation of divinenesse, because it doth raise and erect the mind, by submitting the show of things to the desires of the mind, whereas reason doth buckle and bow the mind to the nature of things. And we see that by these insinuations and congruities with man's nature and pleasure, it hath had access

* Few will admit that the good works of Holbein are miserable examples of portraiture, even of what art is capable of. Holbein was not the painter of all that is attributed to him; but there are works by him, as the Dresden Madona, for instance, which are noble examples of *art*. — W.

and estimation in rude times and barbarous regions, where other learning stood excluded."

In this admirable manner Lord Bacon reasons about an art which he understood; and (but that reading can be of little use where exemplars do not exist) he might have known, that a no less pertinent application of the same reasoning had been long since made to painting and sculpture by the people, who of all others best understood these arts in their full and comprehensive extent.

Xenophon says, that when Socrates* had occasion to discourse with artists, his conversation was of great advantage to them. For example, happening to go to Parrhasius the painter, he discoursed with him of his art to this purpose: "What is painting, Parrhasius? is it not an imitation of visible objects, for do you not express or represent by colours the concave and the eminent, the obscure and the enlightened, the hard and soft, the rough and smooth, the new and old, and in fine all sorts of objects, and all the various appearances of nature? But when you propose to imitate beautiful forms, since for instance it is not easy to find any one person, all whose members are absolutely faultless, do you not select from many human bodies those parts which are best proportioned and most beautiful in each; and by combining them make whole figures that are beautiful throughout? Do you not represent likewise what is most engaging, most lovely, and most desirable in the person, I mean, the disposition of the soul — for do not the very looks confess either malice or good will? In the prosperity of our friends, our looks are gay and full of joy, but in their adversity we look cloudy and dejected. Besides, doth not a noble and liberal spirit, or a mean and ignoble one, a prudent and well governed mind, or a petulant and dissolute one, discover itself in the countenance, air, and gesture of men, and all these differences can be expressed by imitation?" "They can," replies Parrhasius. "Which, then, do you think," says Socrates, "do men behold with greatest pleasure and satisfaction, the representations by which good, beautiful, and lovely

* Socrates was himself a sculptor by education; a Mercury and a draped marble group of the Graces by him, are noticed by Pausanias (i. 22.), as standing in the Propylæa, leading to the Acropolis, at Athens. — W.

manners are expressed, or those which exhibit the base, deformed, corrupt, and hateful?" "There is no comparison between them," said the artist.*

Three things are observable in those remarks of Socrates: first, that painting is capable of giving a true image or likeness of every visible object; secondly, that in the imitation of visible objects, a wise selection from *general nature* be used which has a reference to what is admirable, fit, and proper only; and lastly, this divine man, according to his usual custom, does not forget to intimate that the true dignity of art consists in being advantageous to morality and the interests of mankind, by exhibiting the deformity of vice, and the beauties of virtue.

I have been the longer on this article of the absolute necessity of making a judicious selection in the objects of your imitation, and of directing your attention to the *species* in each walk of character, rather than to the individual, because in this consists the very essence of design. To carry it on with success will indeed require your utmost attention, added to a considerable expanse of previous education: but it will be worth your pains, as it is from hence only that you can be enabled to give a loose to the fervour of your disposition, to be original with dignity and with safety, to avoid being a mere vulgar and uninteresting Dutch copyist on the one hand, or, what is worse, a plunderer, plagiarist, and second-hand imitator on the other. How many admirable things do we find in the antique, in Raphael, and in Poussin, which are regarded with a just contempt, when by plagiarism and second-hand imitation they are transplanted from their natural soil, and separated from the action, circumstance, or occasion, which gave them vigour and value.

Having considered the kind and manner of imitation proper to design, we shall now attend more particularly to the things imitated; and first to *beauty*.

Whether our standard or abstract ideas of beauty, order, and goodness, result solely and immediately (by a kind of arithmetical calculation) from the mere exercise of our contemplative powers on external objects; or whether the result of our contemplation of those external objects goes any further than to furnish us with the necessary *media* for the

* Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, iii. 10. — W.

recognition of a former and more perfect knowledge of those interesting qualities which the soul might have enjoyed in a prior and more perfect state, are questions of difficult determination. But in whatever manner our beneficent Creator has impressed us with those superior ideas, there can be no doubt of the reality of their existence in our minds. We are so evidently formed to distinguish the true and to love the good, that it is utterly impossible for us not to assent (internally at least) to the objects both of the one and the other, when they are fairly proposed to us; and notwithstanding that just and candid men only speak and act in an entire conformity with this evidence; yet even in others, who seem to contradict it, they are only seeming and appearances, by which they would deceive us; for even the most envious and selfish are ready enough to acknowledge this *true*, *beautiful*, and *amiable* in all matters, where their self-love, personal interests, passions, and vanities, are not concerned; as in the virtues and excellence of the great characters of past ages, or distant countries; or even nearer home, when those virtues are out of the sphere of their *own* collisions.

Thus the recognition of these interesting qualities is natural and common to all, in proportion to the attention employed upon them; and it is no argument to the contrary that the consequences which result from this recognition in different minds, do but too often afford us a spectacle of melancholy and shocking contrariety; since that which serves as a foundation for admiration and affection to a good and generous heart, will, from the selfish and the envious, excite nothing but hatred, malignity, and a disposition to persecute.

The recognition of these qualities is however the same in both cases, and the difference of the reception it meets with, seems to arise from the generosity or selfishness, the goodness or the malignity of the heart only.

The disposition and capacity to distinguish and interest ourselves in the *true*, the *beautiful*, the *good*, and the *great*, were given us as a rule and law, continually to point out that election and conduct which is most becoming and most conformable to our nature as moral agents; and nothing can be more certain, than that the interest we take in all the

objects which surround us, is (cæteris paribus) in an exact proportion to the number and degree of those qualities, whether considered singly or combined.

As to *beauty*, prudence may and often does incline us to hesitate in our election of the greater or lesser degree of it, in proportion to the association of those degrees of beauty with other valuable or worthless qualities. These ideas of beauty, order, and goodness, have an intimate and almost immediate reference to each other in the mind; as absolute and complete satisfaction can only result from the perfect union of all these qualities in their highest degree. Therefore it is, that the pleasure which we receive in the contemplation of human nature (where beauty may be in a high degree united with those other qualities) is much greater than that which results from the contemplation of beauty in all the species of animal, vegetable, or other objects, where moral agency does not exist: and yet, such is the innate force or power of mere beauty, even in the lowest order of beings, that the particular perfections discoverable amongst quadrupeds, birds, fishes, trees, and flowers, are sure to excite in us agreeable sensations, and incline us to a predilection and choice, of which those irrational beings appear utterly unconscious and insensible.

There is, then, a *beautiful* which is positive, essential, and independent of national or temporary institutions or opinions. This immutable, and (if I may be allowed the expression) eternal beauty is widely different from those arbitrary, local, temporary notions of beauty which have a kind of occasional currency under the terms *ton*, *fashion*, or *mode;* and, like particular languages, are ever fluctuating and unstable, always different amongst the different nations, and in the different ages of the same nation. This *false* beauty, which roots itself in affectation, has nothing to do with genuine, legitimate art, and is no otherwise worth mention here, than to point it out as a quick-sand, where many ingenious artists have been sunk for ever. It cannot therefore be too studiously avoided, for though a conformity with those temporary modes may gratify our employers, and the circle around them, and consequently be advantageous to what we may call our interest, yet it must lose us the admiration of men of sound judgment in all times; and all the

future frivolities will have fashionable affectations and beauties of their own, quite different from those upon which our attention had been wasted.

Another source of confusion, though less general in its influence, arises from the sensuality which some people mix with their ideas of beauty. A high degree of the luscious, the languid—a simper, or leer—though associated with ordinary qualities, will, with them outweigh all other perfections of body or mind. However, the judgment of those voluptuaries has but little weight with the bulk of mankind: like misers absorbed in one particular passion, they are regarded as blind and dead to every thing else. But the beautiful, which makes so essential a part in the design of a great artist, is, and must be, founded on the unalterable nature of things, and independent of all particular dispositions.

Men have differed more in their definition and manner of explaining beauty, than in their ideas of it. According to the definitions generally given, beauty consists of unity and gradual variety; or unity, variety, and harmony. This may be admitted as true, at least as far as it goes: but it is neither full nor satisfactory; for though it be certain that unity and variety are found in beautiful objects of all kinds,—in flowers, fruits, in the several species of animals as well as in human nature—yet it is equally certain that they are compounded differently, and that though in any one of these species we may further increase the variety, or simplify the unity, yet we should not proportionably add to the beauty, but the contrary.

Man, as a totality, comprehends a greater variety of visible parts than the female, and yet surely he is not more beautiful. We should not increase the beauty of the female bosom by the addition of another protuberance; and the exquisite undulating transitions from the convex to the concave tendencies, could not be multiplied with any success. In fine, our rule for judging of the mode and degree of this combination of variety and unity, seems to be no other than that of its fitness* and conformity to the designation of each species.

* This is well observed; in nature and in art *fitness* of a creature or object to the uses for which it is designed, is assuredly *the essential* of al.

What we admire in the one, would shock us if it were transferred to the other. The variety and union of parts, which we call beautiful in a greyhound, are pleasing in consequence of the idea of agility which they convey. In other animals, less agility is united with more strength; and indeed all the different arrangements please, because they indicate either different qualities, different degrees of qualities, or the different combinations of them.

In all the beauties of colour, diffused so bountifully over the objects which surround us, if they have no other designation, there is at least this which respects the governing animal: those colours delight man by their sprightliness and vivacity, when pure and in a strong degree; and with their tenderness, softness, and delicacy, when mixt and compounded, or even when single, in a degree less forcible.

These properties of colour, simply considered, may be thought to differ from the other kinds of beauty, as being more an object of sense, than of the intellect: but it is remarkable, that even in colour there is a choice and selection; for colours are either clear and beautiful, or muddy, adulterate, or disagreeable; besides colours, whether simple or compounded, are either of a deep, strong tint, or hue, or they are weak and feeble. They are also seen either in a stronger or a fainter light, and they are ever the inseparable adjuncts of those beings and forms, where the intellectual estimates are more immediately concerned.

From the whole of what has been urged, it is very evident that Beauty and Perfection are but different names for the same thing; and, consequently, the most beautiful form of body must be that, which in all its qualities most perfectly corresponds with the idea we have of its species, of whatever kind, sex, or age.

Pure simple beauty or perfection, being equally adapted to all the several animal destinations proper to its species, is therefore equally removed from the several classes of character, which so evidently define and manifest their peculiar powers. Mere Beauty, then (though always interesting), is notwithstanding vague and indeterminate; as it indicates nc particular expression, either of body or mind. But it be-

beauty. In all objects and creatures *form* is the primary of beauty, *colour* is accessory. — W.

comes infinitely more powerful and fascinating, when it is in action, and associated with the *Graces*, its natural attendants; which without altering any of the constituent beautiful parts, make the soul and sensations of the heart visible in the external figure; and by their affecting sensibilities and happy transitions, produce in the whole together an air and aspect the most amiable, most tender, and the most endearing. Mere beauty being by a kind of natural accord peculiarly fitted for the reception of grace, as the true and animating principle of such a body, which, as it indicates no particular designation of power or character, seems reserved for the exercise of those graces, elegances, and tenderness of the heart solely; it is no wonder that the ancient Greeks (ever wise and ever admirable) made such an inseparable connection between Venus and the Graces, Aglaïa, Euphrosyne, and Thalia — Splendour, Sweetness, and Joy — (so I think those names have been translated)* locked hand in hand, harmoniously dancing round the goddess of beauty.

Although the *graceful* is so eminently distinguishable, and carries with it such peculiar power in female action, yet it is by no means to be understood as confined to female action merely: for as grace is produced from that union and entire conformity between the tender sentiments of the heart and the corresponding mild and easy actions of the body, every action or movement of a perfect or beautiful body of either sex, or even of almost any species, where this union is visible, must be graceful. But grace is more eminently observable in the female, because, as was hinted before, their sensibility and tenderness are greater than that of the male, and the superior softness and delicacy of their bodily frame is more in unison with those tender sensations.

A high degree of particular character cannot be superinduced upon pure or simple beauty without altering its constituent parts; this is peculiar to grace only; for particular characters consist, as has been observed before, in those deviations from the general standard for the better purpose of effecting utility and power, and become so many species of a higher order; where nature is elevated into grandeur, majesty, and sublimity.

There is, however, a general character distinguishable in

* Splendour, Joy, and Pleasure. — W.

the sexes, as contrasted with each other. The whole and every part of the male form, generally taken, indicates an aptness and propensity to action, vigorous exertion, and power. In the female form the appearance is very different; it gives the idea of something rather passive than active, and seems created not so much for the purposes of laborious utility, as for the exercise of all the softer, milder qualities. How admirably does this gentleness of frame correspond with the mild and tender pursuits for which female nature was intended, in those numberless little affectionate attentions, maternal weaknesses, and condescensions, so necessary for the fostering and rearing up of the infant offspring; and secondly, as a grateful haven of repose and serenity to the male, after those laborious and often vexatious exertions which the unavoidable collision of his vigorous faculties and situation in society indispensably requires of him. Hence it appears that this superior tenderness and soft affecting sensibility, which are the source and true origin of all those easy, delicate, elegant transitions we distinguish by the epithet, graceful, and which seat beauty, as it were, on its proper throne in female nature, are only the legible, agreeable exteriors of necessary utility. This general characteristic discrimination is touched in a masterly manner by our great poet: —

> "For contemplation he, and valour formed;
> For softness she, and sweet attractive grace;
> More fair, more winning soft, more amiably mild."

Thus, this wise and orderly arrangement of proportionate ends and means, which constitute the beautiful in all created objects, and the grateful sense of which is intellectual and peculiar to man — thus, this admirable arrangement is found to combine more and to increase in its value, as it rises through all the gradations, from the mere inanimate to the vegetative, to the animal, and to the highest degree of rational nature; where it becomes exquisite, and receives its ultimate completion from the visible indications of its union with the still higher qualities of the soul.

The human frame being of all others calculated for the greatest variety of ends, the beautiful is there necessarily at its highest point; and yet such is our innate sense of the superior nature of moral excellence, and our absolute interest

in its being the governing principle of rational agents, that we are as it were compelled to regard all this beauty not only as tasteless and insipid, but still further, as lying and contradictory, when it is not united with those exquisite sensations of a grateful sensibility, as it ought to be in the female; and improved and heightened by vigorous exertion into some admirable, generous, venerable character, in the other sex. We shall here stop our pursuit of beauty, as the next step would lead us into very awful considerations, to which our ideas of all the mundane arrangements of beauty, order, wisdom, and goodness, appear but as so many preparatory initiations. That matter I shall leave for those who can do it more justice, and content myself with observing, that we are evidently disappointed when the external form and interior disposition do not correspond, even in the regions of visionary beings. We hate Mezentius in the Æneid, though he has great bravery, many commanding, kingly qualities, and even great tenderness and affection for his son. But his tyranny, injustice, and cruelty sully all, and make the reader delight in his destruction. Polyphemus might be able to perform as many feats of strength as Hercules, but we detest his brutal, savage disposition, and reserve our love and admiration for the hero whose actions were directed by a humane and generous philanthropy. It is this innate relish for fitness and justice, that constitutes the charm which attaches young and unadulterated minds so strongly to romances. It is in vain that we observe upon the absurdities, the false geography, and the utter ignorance of times, usages, and all civil institutions, which have been jumbled together in these performances. These accessories detract nothing from our admiration. The wildest fictions pass; the soul recognizes its true home and darling objects, when generosity, honour, fidelity, and the other amiable virtues are exhibited in all their Paradisiacal perfection: and notwithstanding our subsequent experience of the real facts of life presents us with a constitution of things exceedingly different and much worse; yet as this does not destroy the reality and congeniality of our feelings regarding this better state, and as they evidently both exist together, they equally co-operate to establish that incontrovertible truth of the exalted and debased nature of

man, which philosophy has seen, but which the Christian religion only has explained.

Nothing can be more uniform than the voice of mankind in all ages with respect to the constituent parts of amiable or hateful character; and upon this foundation, as upon a rock, the artist, whether painter or poet, will, if he is wise, construct the edifice of his future fame. From the whole of what has been observed, it appears that utility or happiness is our aim in the predilection for beauty; that all exterior corporeal qualities have but little value, except from what they receive by their assimilation with the interior disposition; that from the natural constitution of things, we are induced to pursue and covet the one from an expectation and persuasion of finding the other, and consequently that the real source of our enjoyment is spiritual, and ultimately rested upon the elevation and magnanimity of the soul, or the mild and endearing qualities of the heart. The one is the only source of all *action*, *motion*, and *gesture*, that is distinguished by the term *graceful*. The other of all true greatness, sublimity, and majesty of character and expression.

The young student cannot bestow too much attention on these important truths; for he may rest assured, that when the motion, gesture, action, or expression of his figures does not correspond with their interior feelings and disposition (as must inevitably happen in all plagiarisms and transplanting of character), whatever else he can do will be foreign to the purpose, and must appear grimace, affectation, and false art.

Taste being generally considered as a necessary ingredient, not only in the design of a great artist, but also in the judgment of an intelligent observer, it will not be foreign to our purpose to take some notice of its leading qualities.

The word taste, as applied to objects of vision, is a metaphor taken from our corporeal sense of tasting, and means in this metaphorical application, that quick discerning faculty or power of the mind, by which we accurately distinguish the good, bad, or indifferent — the beauty or deformity either in nature, or in the arts which imitate nature. As good taste, then, comprehends our relish for the true, the good, the beautiful, and the sublime, and our disapprobation of whatever does not participate of these estimable qualities in a becoming and just degree; and as the latter which must invigorate

and perfect this intellectual sense can only be supplied by knowledge and judgment, it will necessarily be more or less perfect and exquisite, as our knowledge of the essential qualities is more or less accurate and extensive, and our judgment in the application of this knowledge more or less sound.

The observations which have occurred in treating the preceding articles of abstract or general nature, imitation by selection, beauty, character, and grace, applying so directly to the purposes of taste, and indeed forming the only sure rule by which its just estimates and appreciations can be governed, will make it unnecessary to dwell much longer on this matter. It has appeared clear and evident that this intellectual sense of taste is not a factitious quality, as some giddy sceptics have foolishly imagined. The vanity of low artists, and the presumption of superficial judges, will no doubt find an interest in readily coinciding with an opinion which levels all distinction between themselves and their betters. But though the clatter of ignorance, misinformation, and vanity, cannot be silenced, yet it must and will be despised, for assuredly taste is as much an essential part of the mind of man, as the eyes and hands are of his body, and like these, is capable of a very high degree of accuracy and improvement. It is also evident, that nature being all that really exists, or might possibly exist, and that taste having no legitimate object but this actual and possible nature, or that which by art is made to resemble it—it necessarily follows, that a bad taste in the objects of art can only arise from a bad taste in the objects of nature: prejudice, affectation, and ignorance must operate equally in the production of both.

This taste for the good, the beautiful, and the sublime of nature and art, as it is the same in both, and as it comprehends whatever is interesting to us in the moral as well as physical properties of things, affords an infinite variety of pursuit, admirably accommodated to all the different genius and dispositions of men; one class of artists and admirers of art pursuing the simple, others the serious, the pathetic, the great, the majestic, or the sublime, selecting some with more force, others with more grace, enforcing or combining each, according to its own proper sentiment. There is no department of art which might not become interesting in the hands of a man of sensibility. Who does not feel this in the landscapes of

N. Poussin? sometimes verging to sublimity, and always engaging, from their characteristic unity, graceful simplicity, or ethical associations. Allowing for a little unnecessary rags and vulgarity, who is not also delighted with the serenity and innocent simplicity of many of the scenes of Berchem, Both, Claude, Swaneveld, and Wilson? the simple, laborious, honest hinds; the lowing herds, smooth lakes, and cool extended shades; the snug, warm cot, sufficient and independent; the distant hamlet; and the free, unconfined association between all the parts of nature, must ever afford a grateful prospect to the mind. No doubt much of our satisfaction results from contrasting this state of things with the dark, insidious, hypocritical disguises; the hateful enormities, vanities, affectations, and senseless pageantries, so frequently found in the courts of the great, and in large cities: and it is remarkable that even the elegant Virgil, with all his happy taste of rural beauty, had this contrast uppermost in his mind, when he burst out into that beautiful eulogium upon rural life, in his second Georgic:

> "O Fortunatos nimium, sua si bona nôrint,
> Agricolas!"*

But as there will be more room to particularise in my future discourses, I shall resume my general reasoning, and observe, that all the varieties of excellence are but different portions of the same taste for the beautiful, the good, and the perfect. If these essential foundations of taste have been dressed up differently, according to the various usages of different ages and nations; these differences are only in the accessories, but never in the foundation and essential properties of things, which must be ever and equally the same both in nature and art. The monuments of this taste have ever been a source of the most grateful, permanent satisfaction; and whilst empires, nations, and all the great nothings of the world moulder and pass away, experience shows that we feel our hearts no otherwise interested or concerned about them, than to save out of this general wreck whatever wears the impression of this taste for the beautiful, the good, and the perfect. There is in this matter something singularly congenial with our nature: the sentiments and feelings by which

* *Geor.* ii. 458. — W.

men in all ages have been uniformly governed in their taste and relish for the good and the perfect, are sure, expeditious, and accompanied with a plenitude of evidence and satisfactory elucidation, which the mind seeks for in vain from all other objects of inquiry. We may still wander about, as we have done for three thousand years past, in fruitless speculations, concerning the primary elements whether they be many and distinct, or one and changeable; whether the substratum that upholds sensible qualities called matter, can be said to have any real existence, independent of mind or intellect, since it neither is, nor can be, an object of our bodily sensations. The decision of these and other such questions of difficult and uncertain determination, is happily not necessary for our well being here: it is sufficient for us that we have no difficulty or embarrassment respecting those matters which regard the real end of our designation and happiness: we are at no loss to distinguish between right and wrong, good and bad; and we are peculiarly blessed with this taste, sentiment, or passion, for all the kinds of excellence communicated to man alone, as a principle for moral agency and divine approximation, by which he is distinguished from all the species of brute, irrational animals.

Thus much for our intellectual faculty called taste, which is one and the same in nature and the arts; a highly improved and cultivated taste, or one gross and corrupt, being equally operative in influencing our approbation or disapprobation of the imitated or the natural objects.

The best and surest method which can be recommended to the student for acquiring the theory and practice of this good taste in the arts, is heartily to dissociate and estrange himself from all meanness and servility of pursuit; as this will best enable him to enter wholly and *con amore* into the investigation of the grand, interesting, and perfect of nature, as well moral as physical, since his art is equally concerned in both. Such an art, therefore, which has for its true object to advance the interests of mankind, by placing the cause of virtue and real heroism in the most forcible, efficacious, and amiable light — such an art does indeed require all the elevation and dignity of soul and disposition the student can possibly bring to it. To produce great and noble sensations in others, to exalt their minds, and excite them to the pursuit

of the *honestum*, the *fit*, the *becoming*, the *heroic*, and truly *laudable* part, whatever struggles and labour it may cost them, and however powerfully opposed and surrounded by dangers and present obloquy. Successfully to excite men to this, the students must begin with themselves, and cultivate the man, as well as the artist; for be it ever remembered, that though the head may conceive, and the hand execute, yet it is the heart only which can infuse unction, energy, and vigour into your work — the generous ardour that you will communicate to others will be always proportionate to the noble flame which exists in your own bosoms.

I have omitted to speak of *invention*, because it can hardly be considered as an acquirable quality; since the vigour, spirit, and felicity of invention are the peculiar emanations of that genius which shall be in vain sought for where heaven has not bestowed it. But although invention must derive its existence from genius, yet, if there be no other qualities to nourish and support it than mere genius, it must infallibly run to weeds, and will be productive rather of extravagance and capricious folly than of any thing sound and excellent; for the daring inventive faculties of a vivid aspiring genius indispensably require, more than any thing else, to be powerfully sustained by that provident wisdom and solid judgment which can only arise from an extensive knowledge of the nature, properties, and relations of things.

How admirably is the capacious and sublime invention of Homer sustained by his vast, comprehensive knowledge, and his sound, judicious application of this knowledge in the formation of all those creatures of his fancy, which have been ever regarded with so much delight and utility, and were imitated as so many models of perfection by the legislators, heroes, and all the great characters of antiquity!

This foundation of extensive knowledge and judgment, so indispensably necessary to support poetic invention, is not only equally necessary in your art, but, still farther, there is absolutely required from you an accuracy of investigation, and a laborious prosecution, not at all wanting in poetry. As this matter is curious in its nature, and relates to the essence of our subject, it will be no digression to observe that poetry, when compared with painting, appears to be attended with but few difficulties of execution, and requires but little accu-

rate knowledge of the exterior forms, except in a few of the leading characteristic features: as all the detailed particulars are left to be supplied by the reader how he can. When the conception of the subject and all its parts are secured, what remains is only language, always at command, and continually exercised by the poet and his readers through the whole of life. On the contrary, when the painter, in common with the poet, has completed the conception of his subject, the difficulties of execution, which must embody and substantiate this conception, present a scene altogether foreign to ordinary pursuit. Here he has occasion for all the several circumstantial knowledges of the forms and properties of his objects, the things which necessarily accompany them, together with the infinite variety of their aspects, positions, degrees of illumination and distance, a great part of which can only be known from an intimate acquaintance with the various arts and sciences. In fact, the labour and accumulated observation necessary to execute an extensive conception in painting is so immense, so various, and so foreign to the ordinary pursuits of life, that it is no wonder if the few examples of perfection which have appeared in this way, were ever regarded by the intelligent as the highest reaches of the human capacity, whilst the more ignorant were but too ready to believe them of still higher origin.

The pleasure which we receive from poetry is, as has been observed, limited by the language of each country; it is also still further limited in the degree even in the same country; because the words of the poet do not communicate the same ideas to men differently cultivated. "The heavenly eye, graceful step, and gestures of dignity and love" of Milton's Eve do not exhibit the same image and configuration of parts at St. James's, in the Royal Academy, and at Wapping. The perfections of form in the painter's figures do not, like those of poetry, depend upon the narrow compass of the spectator's mind: the figure in painting and sculpture is actually produced, and in its highest and most cultivated degree of conception, and completed in all its parts. The natural inference which follows from this consideration of completeness and actual existence (and, which is wonderful, should have escaped the discernment of so many ingenious writers), authorizes me to affirm that painting is not, as has been said, a silent poem,

and poetry a speaking picture; but, much more truly, that painting is poetry realised, and that full, complete, and perfect poetry is indeed nothing more than an animated account or relation of the mere conception of a picture. What were the few touches about the brows and hair of Homer's Jove, when compared with that wonder of the world, the statue of Phidias at Olympia? What ideas must have been entertained of this statue, when the inquiry was, whether Jove came down to show himself to Phidias, or whether Phidias had been carried up to see Jove?* The twanging of Apollo's bow-string, when inflicting plagues on the Greeks — what ideas can this passage communicate to the bulk of readers, equal to what is produced by a single glance at the Apollo in the Belvedere?† The Laocoon, though in the hands of the judicious and admirable Virgil — yet what has he, or could he produce, which may be compared with the stupendous

* The sitting Colossal statue of Jupiter, at Olympia in Elis, by Phidias, was considered one of the wonders of the ancient world; it was made exteriorly of ivory and gold; the accessory parts were adorned with paintings by Panænus, and the whole was decorated to the utmost capabilities of art. (See an attempted restoration in the *Jupiter Olympien*, of Quatremère de Quincy.) This statue was made, according to Müller and others, immediately after the completion of the Minerva of the Parthenon, at Athens, 438 B. C., and was finished in 433 B C., a year only before the death of Phidias. This great sculptor died in prison, at Athens; the ostensible cause of his imprisonment was an accusation of impiety, in consequence of his having introduced his own likeness in the basso-rilievo of the shield of the Minerva. He is said to have done this because he was not allowed to inscribe his name upon the statue: the Eleans suffered him to put his name to the Olympian Jupiter, and further intrusted the charge of the statue to his posterity. Pausanias, who visited Olympia nearly five hundred years afterwards, speaks (v. 14.) of the sculptor's descendants, whom he calls Phaidruntai (cleaners, polishers); and he remarks that, before cleaning the statue, they always sacrificed on the altar of Ergane (Minerva Ergane, the protectress of manual labour).

This celebrated work is said, though upon not very authentic sources, to have been carried to Constantinople by the orders of Theodosius the Great (379–395), and there to have perished in the fire which consumed the Lauseion, A. D. 470. (On the time and death of Phidias, compare Heyne, Ueber die Künstlerepochen beym Plinius, *Antiquarische Aufsätze*, i. p. 182 ff; C. O. Müller, *Comm. de Vita Phidiæ*; and Sillig *Catalogus Artificum*.) — W.

† A gallery of the Vatican at Rome. — W.

group * in the Belvedere? All those astonishing beauties which the eye feeds upon with such ecstacy in the famous *Torso* of the Belvedere†, would unavoidably have been quite overlooked by a poet. The Medicean Venus‡, the Farnese Hercules §, and the fighting Gladiator ‖ also,—what is there in poetry that could supply the loss of them? Even to descend to lower matters, what peculiar capacity and skill are required in a poet's representation of an enraged lion, or a piece of beautiful, well arranged architecture, compared with what we find in the lions of Rubens and Snyders, or in the architectonic background of a picture of Raphael or Poussin? ¶

* Discovered in the baths of Titus, 1506. — W.

† The Torso of Apollonius, already mentioned. — W.

‡ In the Tribune at Florence. — W.

§ The colossal Hercules of the Athenian sculptor, Glycon, which, according to *an inscription on an inferior copy*, was made by Glycon from an original statue by Lysippus (Bianchini, *Palazzo dei Cesari*, tv. 18. Müller, *Archäologie der Kunst*, 129. 2.).

This celebrated statue was discovered at Rome, in 1540, in the baths of Caracalla, but the legs were wanting; these were supplied by Guglielmo della Porta, and the statue was placed in the palace of Paul III. (Farnese). The original legs were, however, shortly afterwards found, but they were not substituted for the restoration of Guglielmo della Porta until 1787, when the Farnese collection was removed to Naples, where the statue is now preserved, and is one of the principal ornaments of the Museo Borbonico. The hand holding the apples is a restoration, by a sculptor of the name of Tagliolini. — W.

‖ In the Louvre at Paris. — W.

¶ It has been very truly, as well as elegantly said by Ovid, that Venus would have for ever remained buried under the waters, if she had not been happily drawn out by the pencil of the ingenious Apelles; and, indeed, every thing considered, it would be very difficult to divine in what state, and to what degree, the whole or any part of the sublime imagery of the Greek and Latin poets could be communicated to their readers, if these matters had not been thus realised to our eyes in the works of art which fortunately remain.

Words, after all, are but words, and there is no peculiar art in poetry which can make them any thing more. They are but symbols formed for the eye, out of twenty-four arbitrary scratches, called letters, and certain vibrations of the air, occasioning certain irritations in our organ of hearing, which by national compacts are made to suggest the idea of existing things, with their several modes and degrees of relation: and though the communication of all this matter of compact is more or less perfect, according to the degress of our education in it, yet how very imperfect it is, even at the best, will soon appear, on attempting to describe in mere words any individual complex forms, as the portrait or

For the same reason, then. that the dramatic in epic or other poetry is more perfect than the narrative part, and that the dramatic in representation is more perfect than in the perusal: for the same reason painting is (as far as vision goes) the most full, complete, and perfect drama; because it is a drama composed from general nature, where every individual imperfection is omitted, and where, in all the various parts of this complex whole, every thing is selected with corresponding and just fitness.

It appears, then, that if all the great requisites of sensibility, knowledge, and judgment are so indispensably necessary to sustain poetic invention, it must surely be allowed, that if not a greater yet at least an equal degree of those essential qualities is absolutely required to give vigour and value to

likeness of any man's face, and numberless other matters, which need not be mentioned. However. what language wants in precision, is abundantly compensated in the facility and extent of what it does communicate in the whole range of characters, manners, passions, sentiments, and intercourse of society. But this facility, extent, and use of language, applied as it is to all arts, sciences, trades, and other objects of human concern and knowledge, is common, and more or less every man's inheritance: and Malbranche, in his *Enquiry*, and Nicole, in his *Essais de Morale*, Swift, Cervantes, Sterne, and many other prose writers, have at least as deeply and extensively applied this language as any of the writers in verse, whether of the comic, tragic, or epic kind.

It should seem, then, that the advocates for the superiority of poetry over painting have been contending for advantages which are by no means peculiar to poetry; and a stickler for Cocker's arithmetic might as well contend for the superiority of his own art, since there are many numerical combinations, about which the art of painting would be employed to little purpose.

Let us suppose, for a moment, that a great artist, a Michelangelo, a Raphael, Poussin, or Rubens, was deprived of his sight; *his* art would then be utterly lost to the world. He would no longer have it in his power to hold out that mirror of ingenuity, where the whole visible creation is magically portrayed with so many accumulated advantages, where all its beauties are united, and all its deficiencies, imperfections, and incongruities taken away. Yet, notwithstanding all this, if you will allow him the use of language, he has it still in his power to talk of all these things; and whether this talk be delivered in prose or verse, whether it be sung or said, with more or less energy, you have still remaining all that poetry can give, which, as was observed before, is only an animated account of certain productions of this master art, this improving mirror of nature, which his blindness debars him from calling into actual existence. Hence then we are warranted to conclude that our art may, to use a French phrase, be justly termed *l'art par excellence.*

the invention of the painter. Though the mediums of sense, through which the works of the painter and poet operate, are different, yet their intentions are the same, and they are both equally addressed to the same qualities of the heart and intellect in the spectators and hearers.

As for any rules that may be prescribed to assist invention, they can be but vague at best, particularly for the man who has occasion for them. Those most generally laid down are, that unity of idea be pursued through all the parts, principal and accessory, and that all necessary conformity with the circumstances of times, places, usages, characters, and manners be continually kept in view. But the successful application of these, and all such necessary observances, must entirely depend on the stock of liberal general education which is previously treasured up in the mind of the artist. Without this adequate education, the hands of the painter or sculptor are inevitably tied up from all great undertakings, whatever his natural genius may be; for nothing can be more true than the old adage, "that the painter paints himself, or that the work is always a representation of the author." This is not to be understood, as some have imagined, that either the representation of the artist's face, or the peculiar conformation of his bodily structure is traceable in his works. No; it is the mind of the artist which is visible in what he does: the one must necessarily be an offtract of the other; they are equally wise or foolish, contracted or expanded, made up of commonplace and gross ordinary materials, or the contrary. From a rude, trifling, or ill-formed mind nothing good, instructing, great, sublime, amiable, or interesting can be expected. Such an artist may, indeed, attempt to employ his memory, and imitate the celebrated works of others, coldly and at a distance; but he cannot be original without showing himself.

Thus, young gentlemen, I have, to the best of my power, endeavoured to direct your attention to the important essentials of that comprehensive design upon which the becoming dignity of your art does absolutely depend. It is in the design, and in that only, that men can recognise those operations of imagination and judgment which constitute the *ideal of art*, and show its high lineage as the offspring of philosophy and the sister of poetry.

This ideal of design has for its object *general* and *perfect*, and not individual, imperfect nature. It is extended to all the parts of the art; to ideal forms respecting beauty and propriety of character; to the ideal in the composition of the story, fable, or subject, purged of all dead, uninteresting, impertinent circumstances; to the ideal in colouring and the conduct of light and shade, respecting the happy choice and adaptation of peculiar tones or tints, the degrees of strength, tenderness, union, or variety, seizing upon and uniting all those transitory, though happy, accidental effects and graces which may be extended to the most unimportant things, even to the folds of a drapery.

Divested of design art becomes a mere toy, a mechanical bauble, unconnected with either the head or the heart, uninteresting to the wise and good, unprofitable to all, and amusing only to the weak and idle.

Drawing, composition, chiaroscuro, and colouring, are but the constituent parts of design taken in this general sense.

I shall (God willing) in my next lecture, consider DESIGN in the more limited, practical sense, to which this term has been applied in treating of the *contour* and other relative parts of objects, when we shall have an opportunity of making some occasional remarks on the different merits, style, and manner, of some of the chief of our great predecessors in the art.

LECTURE III. — ON DESIGN (*continued*).

GENTLEMEN,

HAVING in my last discourse considered DESIGN in its comprehensive sense, as it is understood to mean the whole conception or idea which a painter or sculptor expresses by the imitation of natural objects; I shall now consider Design in that more limited sense in which this term is applied, in treating of the terminations, contours, or boundaries of objects, in the whole, and in their parts. In sculpture it is

generally understood to extend no further than the geometrical arrangement of those terminations, according to their real figure and proportion: but in painting there is superadded to this, the consideration of the perspective appearance of this proportionate arrangement of figure, as viewed from one point only. This is called *drawing*, by way of excellence, to distinguish it from all mere geometrical, regular delineations, and is undoubtedly the highest and most comprehensive mechanic excellence of the art. As all the considerations of sculpture are therefore necessarily included in drawing, and indeed make but a part of it, I shall, in the following observations, endeavour to call your attention to those sound principles, in which the chief excellence of drawing has been observed to consist.

Drawing has been always considered as the necessary foundation of painting, without which it is but a mere confused daubing of colours; without drawing it is impossible to obtain the true images of things, or actions, their just proportions, variety of figure, energies, expressions, animation, or sentiment. Drawing only can give a faithful representation of all those visible fluctuations of figure which result from the wonderful combinations of muscles, tendons, and bones, by which the animal functions are performed, exhibiting in the several limbs and parts, the exact degree of effort, proportioned to the action and occasion, and by which the inclinations and emotions of the soul are visibly imprinted in the countenance and gesture. The designer or draftsman must necessarily be conversant with those laws of gravity, by which only all bodies can be sustained in whatever action and motion by the necessary regulation of an equilibrium in their parts; in fine, he must perspectively dispose and arrange all his objects in their proper situations, relative magnitudes, distinguishing the several qualities of surface, of trees, of landscape, buildings, or draperies, by the several folds, leafage, and economy of parts peculiar to each.

As the study of the human figure combines a greater variety of important considerations than that of any other animal body, all the great designers or draftsmen have attached themselves to it with such a peculiar predilection, that by the phrases, ability in drawing, great designer, or

MAGDALEN COLLEGE

skilful draftsman, we are always understood to mean (by a kind of excellence) the skilful delineation or drawing of the human body. It is perhaps unnecessary to mention, that I mean the naked body, since all this variety of elevated knowledge and accurate skill cannot be otherwise shown; and it is well known, that for the same reason, the Grecian sculptors are by all men considered as the greatest designers. The Dutch artists who, however ingenious they may have been in other respects, yet as they had never attached themselves to the delineation of the human body (but rather to the rags and furs with which it was enveloped), have never been considered as designers or draftsmen at all. The Grecian artists, and all the great moderns, who have judiciously followed their heroic example, instead of idly and meanly wasting their attention upon imitating the work of the tailor or mantua-maker, employed their whole care and solicitude upon those beauties of proportion, character, muscular exertion, and graces of expression or sentiment, which always discover themselves in the natural actions and gestures of the naked figure; and for the most part, whenever they made use of drapery, it was but as an agreeable adjunct to assist the composition, and to cover some inessential part, but never or rarely as a principal worth imitating for itself.*

* To make the display of the *nude* an *essential* of *high art* is approximating the absurd, as it amounts, except on rare occasions, to rendering high art impossible. In accordance with this view, the elevated and the beautiful can seldom be united with the probable, for how few passages in history will admit of the introduction of the naked figure, and yet how vast is the field of history wherein to display the moral and the beautiful. The skilful arrangement of drapery involves as much taste and judgment as the proper management of the nude, and the draped figure may be represented as beautiful and as dignified as the undraped. A skilful arrangement of drapery does not consist in displaying the *exact form* of the nude, as if the drapery were a wet sheet, or blown against the person by the wind, but in showing the exact position and proportion of the covered, though not concealed parts.

Raphael seldom painted the naked form, yet his figures are pre-eminently distinguished for dignity of character; and this is not owing to any display of the nude beneath the drapery, but to the *position* of the figures themselves, and the just arrangement of the folds of their draperies. This hankering after the nude is one of the morbid symptoms of the taste of that period: with what success such a display is made, may be seen in

As in all other things, so in drawing, that which is principal and characteristic claims our first and greatest attention. From the general construction of the human body, its great and essential divisions of the trunk and its extremities, the joints and centres of motion, as well in the sub-division of those extremities, as where they are articulated with the trunk; from the happy discrimination of these parts, and their necessary adjustment to each other, the head to the neck and shoulders, the trunk to the haunches, arms, legs, and feet; from their peculiar forms in repose, and in the different degrees of agility and muscular exertion, as in all the possible motions and exertions of those parts, the figure is infinitely diversified by the contraction and relaxation of the several moving powers, or muscles. by which those actions are produced. The faithful spirited delineation of these characteristic essentials, which requires an intimate acquaintance with the anatomical construction, has been almost always overlooked when this anatomical skill was wanting; without it an artist cannot even see what is before him, and he will unavoidably trifle away his assiduity upon the minute corrugations of the mere external surface, upon the small veins, multiplied wrinkles, and trifling peculiarities of the skin, which are rendered with such laborious, ignorant diligence by Rembrandt, Du Sart, and others. Besides the absence of all becoming excellence, this wretched trifling attention can manifest nothing but mere deformity; as for example, the plies and wrinkles in the body of the Christ in Rembrandt's famous Descent from the Cross, show the body to have been disordered and decayed, as the skin is loose, almost detached, and too large for its contents. The essential parts of the anatomical construction, the articulation of the bones, insertion and enunciation of the muscles, and the case or skin in which this machinery is enveloped, and the asperities of its transitions, more or less softened, according to the nature of the different exertions and different characters, age, sex, and condition; these important attentions are not to be dispensed with, and the relative proportion or conformity of these parts to each other, and to the whole

some of the monuments of the time, in St. Paul's, and in Westminster Abbey. A well-draped figure implies a thorough understanding of the nude in the artist. — W.

together, ought also to be a consideration of the first importance.

The proportions or relative magnitude of the parts of a human body depend upon the nature of its character; and as the character may be infinitely diversified, the proportions will, of course, be infinitely various; for the tall and short, the fat and lean, strong and weak, the several degrees of these and all their possible combinations, have each of them a conformity of parts and proportionate arrangement of relative magnitudes peculiar to itself. The best, and indeed only precept that can be recommended for acquiring this knowledge of proportion, is the accurate investigation of general nature in its approaches to the abstract of each character. The more we are extensively knowing and practised in this study, the better we shall be enabled to appropriate to each character, and degree of character, the peculiar proportions that appertain, and, as I may say, constitute it. In this manner it was that the ancient Greeks proceeded in collecting the materials for their admirable works; they had no general receipt of proportions, communicable to different characters, or degrees of character; and the famous Doryphorus of Polycletus could only have been studied as a happy example of the rule or law of nature, respecting that particular character, and not as applying generally.* The antique statues now remaining are, some of them, excellent examples of the true mode of study to be pursued, in adapting proportion to character, by the happy conformity of each to the other; and though they apply but to a few characters, as but a few of them remain entire, and the best of them but mere fragments, yet the track of study is sufficiently indicated: this is the only true, artist-like, and manly use that can be made of those vestiges of the ancients, and they are, and often have been, extremely misapplied, when the proportions on which they were constructed are, as so many general standards, extended beyond the individual occasion,

* Doryphorus, literally, *lance-bearer*. This statue, says Pliny (*Hist. Nat.* xxxiv. 8. 19.), was termed by subsequent artists the *Canon* (κανών), and used by them as the *standard* of the beauty of human proportions. Lysippus called it his master (Cicero, *Brutus*, 86.). Polycletus was the pupil of Ageladas of Argos, and the contemporary of Zeuxis and Alcibiades, in the latter part of the fifth century before Christ. — W.

where only they could appear pertinent and natural. This misuse and too general application of the proportions of these excellent statues have not only been the occasion of great limitation of character, but have, for near too hundred years past, almost precluded the proper study of it, at least with the general run of artists. Lanfranco, Cortona, Cignani, Le Moine, and others, have indulged this fondness for some particular proportions to such a degree, that their figures appear, to use the law phrase, to be all of the same venter; brothers and sisters, with no other difference but what arises from their action, position, or age. Many absurdities of the first magnitude must inevitably follow, when the proportions are not peculiarly adapted to the character of the figure: the form of the muscles depend upon the nature of the character; and the degree of muscular exertion will be according to the occasion of calling it forth. In all these respects the Hercules tying a Bow-Knot, by Roubiliac, is very faulty; the proportions of this figure are nothing more than those of any ordinary, active man, and the great degree of muscular exertion and action manifested on so trifling an occasion, does not make the figure more Herculean, but rather heightens the absurdity: here is nothing of Hercules but the lion's skin and the club. These blemishes are much to be regretted, for in all other respects, this is amongst the best, most natural, and happily-executed figures in Westminster Abbey.

In the early times of art, after Cimabue and Giotto, all the parts of the body were very much confounded together, and though dry and meagre, they were (particularly in their flexures) as inartificially drawn as if copied from the bendings of a sand bag. According to the notes I made upon looking over the old works at Florence, this dryness and Gothic imperfection was happily done away about the year 1400, in the time of Bruneleschi and Ghiberti. The Crucifixion (large as life), by Bruneleschi, in Santa Maria Novella, is very well understood as to the anatomy, which in the principal parts and articulations is very visible, as the figure inclines somewhat to the meagre character, though not near so much so as the general run of the works of that time. The attitude is good, and not too stiff, with an agreeable sway of the body, and a good character in the head:

there is great truth in the whole and parts of this figure, particularly in the thighs, knees, legs, and feet; although it is not executed in so bold, noble, and masterly a style as Ghiberti's Evangelist, at Or San Michele. There is in the figure of Ghiberti a very great boldness and spirit in all the parts, a fierceness and majesty in the turn and character of the head, a loose play of the limbs, the bendings and articulations of the joints decided and well marked; even the centre joint of the fingers bends back, and so much in Michelangelo's manner, that there can be but little doubt that Michelangelo's early studies had been much formed upon this figure. Although the ingenious Masaccio participated largely in this improved style of his two contemporaries and friends, yet beyond the mere contour it cannot be so apparent in his works, for the obvious reason of the greater complexity of painting. That rilievo of light and shadow, which was so necessary to give the appearance of truth and reality to the painter's drawings, was a matter of great additional investigation and labour, not yet fully known in the art, and with which the sculptor had no concern, as in his art it followed of course, and in its highest perfection, as the natural accompaniment of the figure in rilievo.

This true style of drawing, which is attached to all the superior considerations of essential form, proportionate, characteristic discrimination, and expressive propriety, was begun by Masaccio and his contemporaries, completed by Michelangelo, Da Vinci, and Raphael, and continued by the Carracci, Domenichino, and other excellent artists of the good school, as well Frenchmen, as Italians; the inherent dignity of this style of drawing, and the great celebrity of those who excelled in it, will sufficiently induce you to make the same election, and to pay but little regard to the cavils of the ignorant, or the naturalists, as they choose to call themselves, if any such cavillers do yet remain amongst us. In this masterly style are many of the figures of Michelangelo, and though he is not always correct in his adaptation of the character to the subject, yet for the characters he has chosen, they are, as to the drawing, executed with more truth, spirit, and science, than any thing that has appeared since the resurrection of the arts. His sublime Jonas, his Haman, and some figures in the Last Judgment, are above all comparison

for sound, intelligent drawing His figure of God, creating the sun and moon, is, as to the idea of the action, and the grace and spirit with which it is rendered, far beyond any of those of Raphael, not alone those in the Loggie, which are said to have been executed after Raphael's designs, by his scholars or workmen, but even that in the Dispute of the Sacrament; and that other, taken from the vision in Ezekiel, which is Raphael's best, has much of the Jove in it, and yet is far short of the divine energy, majesty, and grace of Michelangelo's figure. The character of Michelangelo, as a designer, has always been prized in proportion as design itself was understood and cultivated: Raphael had reason to bless God, as he did, that he was born in the time of this great man; and if Michelangelo's reputation has diminished in latter times, it is because this essential part of the art has been less attended to than those that are more showy and superficial.* No man has delineated with more skill all those actions which require spirit and energy; and in general the members and parts of his figures seem to have all their true magnitude and contents, however foreshortened by their perspective position. Although foreshortening, when too often affected, or in too violent a degree, is not less displeasing than it is vicious, yet a small degree of it, as in the body and thighs of Michelangelo's Jonas†, gives a happy taste and beauty to the drawing even of a single figure, where it is thought to be least admissible. The avoiding of foreshortening entirely is very faulty, and destroys that air of truth and nature so essential to art; since a painter does not draw geometrically, but perspectively, and there can be but few actions of figures seen from a point, which have not more or less foreshortening in some part: the excess and affectation of it only is blameable, the thing itself is a principal ingredient in the taste of drawing.

There is an idle opinion, which has been handed down from one writer to another, which is, that the style of design

* The principal works of Michelangelo are the prophets and sibyls on the vault of the Sistine Chapel; they were painted in 1509–12, during the time that Raphael was engaged on the two principal Stanze in the Vatican — the Stanza della Segnatura and the Stanza dell' Eliodoro: all these works were executed in the pontificate of Julius II. The "Last Judgment" was commenced for Clement VII., in 1533, thirteen years after the death of Raphael: it was finished in 1541. — W.

† On the vault of the Sistine Chapel. — W.

of Michelangelo is altogether confined to one character, of a robust and muscular kind, copied always from the same model, who, as Freart ridiculously says, was the porter of his academy. If this opinion is not altogether false and groundless, yet at least it is shamefully overcharged; and I would not have mentioned it, but to put you so far on your guard, that it may not prevent you from allowing yourselves all those advantages in the study of drawing with which the works of this great restorer of art will best supply you. This exaggerated censure had been originally ushered into the world with much more moderation and justice, and under the sanction of a most respectable name; for a writer of Michelangelo's own time, on mentioning the Last Judgment, says, that when he was at Milan, a scholar of Da Vinci informed him that his master spoke of it to this effect: "That the only thing which displeased him in this work was, that in so many various aspects, there were so few figures, from which cause the muscles were as apparent in the youthful as in the aged, and that the outlines were of the same character." The remark is in some measure just, as applied to the Last Judgment, but it is worth observing that it never could have been made by Da Vinci *, as he left Rome to go to France in the Pontificate of Leo X., and the Last Judgment of Michelangelo was not executed till near twenty years afterwards, under Paul III. No doubt a considerable monotony of character prevails in the Last Judgment, where also his want of general management in the distribution of his objects as a painter (which, by-the-bye, he never professed himself to be) is sufficiently evident. But this does not appear in his less extensive compositions in the ceiling, which were painted some years before, when he was in the vigour of life. He was fond of introducing the expressive, or, as the Italians more happily call it, the *risentito*, and in all its possible varieties of action and position. This he knew was his own chief excellence, and was most wanting in his contemporaries, and he has sometimes (as in a few of the prophets, and other figures) run into an exaggeration of this, as well in the proportion of the parts as in the exhibi-

* Leonardo da Vinci died fourteen years before the Last Judgment was commenced: he died at Cloux, near Amboise, in France, May 2. 1519, in his 67th year. — W.

tion of the muscles, exceeding the just bounds of discretion and nature; but this abuse is only found in a few instances, and he is by no means confined even to this character, noble as it is; as his statue of Bacchus, his Pietà at St. Peter's, his Adam asleep, some of his figures over the cornice, and many other examples in the Sistine Chapel, abundantly testify. The character of this figure of the Bacchus is misapplied, as is also that of his Christ at the Minerva, and perhaps that of his so justly celebrated Moses; but overlooking this, and regarding them as certain grand and majestic characters of nature, there is surely nothing modern of equal merit for elevation, for unity of idea, and the most consummate knowledge of the figure, particularly the Christ and the Moses.

Although the profound researches of Leonardo da Vinci were generally extended to all the parts of painting, yet his sagacity was so effectual in each, that it may be truly said that the chief part of the excellence in some of the greatest of his successors was owing to the discoveries of this great and philosophical artist. From his works, Giorgione and Fra Bartolomeo formed their beautiful style of colouring and rilievo, and Raphael his taste for the expressive and for diversity of character. The back ground of Da Vinci's Holy Family, and St. Michael, at Paris, is petite, and savours of the Gothic; but the Madonna and St. Michael have a most uncommon air of truth, beauty, and sweetness. Whether the picture which is shown at San Celso as his so much celebrated St. Anna be a copy by Lovino or Salai, or whether Da Vinci did any thing more than a cartoon* of this admirable design, matters not; but the sensibility, pleasing sweetness, propriety, and felicity of character of the Madonna, St. Anna, and other parts of this picture, cannot be overrated. In the stronger expressions, also, he seems to have gone greater lengths than any contemporary or succeeding artists in marking the emotions of the soul in the countenance and action. His enthusiasm, though great, is always equalled by the coolness and solidity of his judgment: truth and energy go hand in hand, in whatever I have seen that was really his. There could not be a more happy example of this union than in his famous picture of

* Now in the Royal Academy, London. — W

the Last Supper, at Milan. There is a print of this picture done from a drawing of Rubens'. The deformities, and slovenly, and precipitate incorrectness of Rubens' style of drawing are visible throughout; it gives but a lame idea of Da Vinci's work.* The small copy at St. Germain l'Auxerrois is much better, though greatly wanting in the spirit and decision of the original; all that happy diversity of character, expressive agitation, and tender sentiment, appear to have been but little felt, and are ill rendered by the cold, timid hand of the copyist.†

This glorious work of Leonardo is now no more. I saw the last of it at Milan; for in passing through that city, on my return home, I saw a scaffold erected in the Refettorio, and one half of the picture painted over by one Pietro Mazzi; no one was at work, it being Sunday, but there were two men on the scaffold, one of whom was speaking to the other with much earnestness about that part of the picture which had been re-painted. I was much agitated, and having no idea of his being an artist, much less the identical person who was destroying so beautiful and venerable a ruin, I objected with some warmth to the shocking ignorant manner in which this was carried on, pointing out at the same time the immense difference between the part that was untouched and what had been re-painted. He answered, that the new work was but a dead colour, and that the painter meant to go over it all again. Worse and worse, said I: if he has thus lost his way when he was immediately going over the lines and features of Leonardo's figures, what will become of him when they are all thus blotted out, and when, without any guide in repassing over the work, he shall be utterly abandoned to his own ignorance. On my remonstrating afterwards with some of the friars, and entreating them to take down the scaffold and save the half of the picture which was yet remaining, they told me that the convent had no authority in this matter, and that it was by the order of the Count de Firmian, the Imperial Secretary of State. Thus perished one of the most justly celebrated monuments of modern art, particularly for that part of

* There are good prints of this now decayed work by Frey, Morghen, Wagner, and A. L. Dick. — W.

† The best copy is that by Marco d'Oggione, now in the Royal Academy, London. — W.

design which regards the skilful delineation of the various sentiments of the soul, in all the diversities of character, expression of countenance, and of action.

As to Leonardo's ability in drawing the naked, we may safely conclude, from what appears in the Battle for the Standard *, that nothing but the scarcity of his works could have prevented his obtaining the highest degree of reputation in this part of his art also. His treatise on painting discovers the utmost sagacity, depth, and familiarity of knowledge respecting the human figure, in all its diversities of character, actions, and motions. His occasional observations upon the anatomy of the human body, the articulations of the bones, the figure and offices of the muscles, the equiponderation of its parts, with and without adventitious weights, and its curious and necessary mechanism to obtain the power of vigorous exertion; these masterly observations have long since made all intelligent people regret that the treatise he has expressly written on the subject of anatomy, and to which he so often refers, should remain unpublished, when it might be of use and entertainment to the artists of this or other academies, or to the world in general. What might not be expected from such an author on such a subject? besides, it might illustrate the history of anatomy, as this book is perhaps the earliest treatise on the subject of osteology and myology; it must have been near fifty years prior to the publication of Vesalius; and the short work of Mundinus, written about the year 1478, treats of very little besides the viscera.

Raphael's great excellence in design lies more in a happy union of all its essential parts, than in the energy of any of those parts directly considered; he possessed all those parts in a high and respectable degree, particularly the expressive, which was his most characteristic, predominating quality; although it is certain that his expression is sometimes not so accurately and happily defined as it might be, or would have been in the hands of Da Vinci or Domenichino; it has often more of vague, general agitation, than that which is specific, precise, and peculiar to the passion, and to its degree. This

* Executed in 1503, on one end of the Council Hall at Florence, for the Gonfaloniere Soderini. The picture was never finished. Part of it is engraved in the *Etruria Pittrice*. The celebrated "Cartoon of Pisa," by Michelangelo, was designed for the opposite end of the same room.

is to be understood of the expression or passion in the countenance merely, for the action and gesture of his figures are always accurately defined and well adapted to the occasion. The timidity and coldness of Raphael's early works show no indications of his subsequent prevailing character. Prognostications founded upon them would differ very widely from what eventually happened in the course of his progress.* This taste for the expressive he seems to have adopted from Da Vinci, as well respecting the character of his figures as their energies of action and passion. The mind and intention of the figure is expressed in every part of the action, and all the parts of the body have a happier conformity with the idea or general character, whether it be tall or short, fat or lean, strong or weak, joyous or melancholy; and they are always happily adapted to the occasions and situations in which they are placed. The figures of Raphael are remarkably well proportioned in their different kinds, and have much of the verity and unaffected air of particular characters in nature; although, upon a close inspection, it is sufficiently evident that they were copied from nature with considerable license, that much of what was inessential was judiciously neglected, and that his solicitude was only employed in seizing what was necessary and proper for his expression and character; and though his success seems, generally speaking, to have been much confined to the old and middle aged, and seldom passes beyond the comely or handsome, yet his fertile imagination and excellent judgment have produced the most extensive and unexampled variety, even within those limits.

In Raphael's figures the energy of action and expression (as was before observed) always arises out of the occasion, and are happily and justly proportioned to it. This discretion appears often wanting in Michelangelo. The energy and expression of his figures cannot always be accounted for

* Raphael had three styles, — his Perugino, his Florentine, and his Roman; it is to the works executed in the first of these styles that Barry alludes. His Florentine style dates from 1504, from his twenty-second year; the last picture of his earliest method is the celebrated "Sposalizio," at Milan, a work abounding in beauties: the last, of his second, or Florentine style, is the Theology, or "Dispute on the Sacrament," in the Stanza della Segnatura in the Vatican; it was painted in 1509, and though in his second manner, is one of his greatest works. — W.

from the character and occasion, and even when they can, some of them appear to have more than the occasion calls for. Besides this admirable discretion and judgment, in which Raphael appears almost *unique* (as Da Vinci has unavoidably done so little) there is a general air of urbanity diffused over Raphael's figures, which seems to have been derived from his general observations on the antique statues and basso-rilievos; I say general observations, for indeed they appear nothing more, and he seems never to have paid much attention to an exquisite degree either of beauty or of elevated character.* Many of his subjects, such as the School of Athens, and the lower part of the Sacrament, do not perhaps absolutely require either of these, but in those that do he is much wanting. This is generally apparent whenever he has to do with ideal combinations in the classes of the elevated characters and possible forms of nature, as in the Cupid and Psyche at the Farnesina, where he has generally run into an unskilful, exaggerated imitation of Michelangelo, or in most of his other works, where he remains in the mediocrity of ordinary nature, freed indeed from grosser individual blemishes, but far short of the perfection that might and ought to have been collected from aggregate nature. His Christ in the Transfiguration has neither that superior beauty or majesty that might have been expected from the sublime and happy way in which the more subordinate characters and expressions are treated; and his Christ, in the Dispute of the Sacrament, is even still less beautiful, perfect, majestic, or extraordinary. His naked Apollo in the Parnassus is (independent of the absurdity of playing on the fiddle) in a poor style of drawing, and ill conceived as to proportion and character. The Muses, and most of the other female figures, have nothing very extraordinary either as to beauty or character. His women in general are either charged and heavy, with some comeliness,

* On this subject Raphael may be allowed to speak for himself. He says, in a letter to Count Baldassare Castiglione, — "to paint a beautiful woman I must see several, with this condition, that your excellence may be near me to select the more beautiful. But as there are few good judges, and few beautiful women, I have recourse to a certain ideal in my mind. Whether this be beneficial to art I know not; but I strive to form such an ideal in my mind." (Bernardino Pino, *Nuova Scelta di Lettere*, &c.) — W.

or dry and petite, without any thing very exquisite as to grace, character, or beauty. His woman carrying water in the Incendio del Borgo, though of this charged and heavy make, is yet truly sublime, by the expressive energy of her action. The angels, also, in the Heliodorus are fine instances of energy and expression, though they are not sufficiently discriminated from his mortals by either superior beauty or sublimity of character.

It has been often and justly observed, that in the great variety of characters which occur in Raphael's works, although no offensive deficience is ever found, yet he appears to have better understood the middle walk, that of apostles, philosophers, and such like, than any other. His Transfiguration is a very admirable specimen of excellent drawing, taste, and conduct in this way; the drawing of the heads, hands, and feet is excellently diversified, as well in their character as aspects. His St. Paul, and some of the other characters in the S^t^. Cecilia at Bologna are even still more spiritual and beautifully elevated. The proportions of the Cecilia and Magdalen are select, faultless, and nothing heavy or over-charged, but they are not comparatively of equal perfection in their way with the male figures. The best drawn naked figure that I know in all Raphael's works is the young man hanging from the wall, in the Incendio del Borgo.* Though the character is not very elevated, yet nature is well chosen, and it is preserved throughout with an admirable uniformity and purity, and the anatomy is not less bold and decisive than it is faithful and correct. The triton and nymph in the back-ground of the Galatea are also remarkable for purity and a good taste of the naked, as is also the back leg and thigh of the Diogenes in the School of Athens. His Prudence in the picture of Jurisprudence is on the whole one of the most elegant, beautiful, and correctly drawn of his female figures. Besides the other great merits of the Madonna della Sedia at Florence, the face is very beautiful, of the delicate

* This figure is in the style of Michelangelo, as are all the others in this composition; but the fresco was not executed by Raphael, and it is generally allowed to be among his inferior productions. Barry's bias in favour of the *naked* is apparent in all these remarks upon the character of Raphael's works. Marcantonio's prints after Raphael give an excellent idea of his maturer style of design. — W.

kind, like the Venus de' Medici; the hands lie excessively well in perspective, but are a little mannered and squadrate, like Barocci and Andrea del Sarto, so as not perfectly to correspond with the character of the head; the head of the little Jesus is even more beautiful, true, and natural, than any thing of Titian's, who, in general, is above all men in the infantine characters, and yet the arm is a little too square and Michelangelesque. The characters of the Madonna and Child are much more elevated and ideal in the Holy Family at Versailles, but they are not so happily and naturally rendered.

Raphael's washed drawing of the Calumny of Apelles* at Modena, is the most perfect in its kind of any thing I have yet seen: truth of form, just proportion, character, and expression, are the sole objects sought after in this drawing: nothing is unskilfully charged for the purpose of obtaining grandeur, no affected artificial sway to produce grace, nothing of that false spirit and mistaken freedom or scratching of the pen which connoisseurs regard with such absurd, and, I fear, affected ecstacy. To such judges this drawing would appear cold and tame, as it is every where conducted with care and attention; the contour is in the highest degree precise and correct, and shadowed with a wash of bistre. The happy precision of this and other undoubted drawings of Raphael, their perfect similarity of style with what he has done in the

* Apelles of Ephesus, not of Cos. This painter was living at the court of Ptolemy Philopator, 218 B. C. There is a picture of the same subject in the Florentine gallery, by Sandro Botticelli, and another at Hampton Court, by Federigo Zucchero. The figure seated on the throne with the ass's ears is Ptolemy, and he is represented as listening to the calumny of Antiphilus — that Apelles was concerned in the conspiracy of Theodotus, the Egyptian governor of Coele Syria. (Lucian, *de Calumnia.*) Ptolemy at first listened to the accusation, but upon being afterwards convinced of its falsity, he made ample amends to the injured painter. The latter, however, after his return to Ephesus, painted this celebrated picture of Calumny.

Ptolemy was seated upon his throne, Suspicion and Ignorance were at his sides, before him was Calumny dragging a youth by the hair; she was preceded by Envy, followed by Deceit and Artifice: Repentance and Truth were represented in the back-ground. The allegory is evidently bad, the subject is inapplicable: it implies, also, a thorough understanding of iconology.

See the article Antiphilus, in the Supplement to the *Penny Cyclopædia.* — W.

chambers of the Vatican, with the S^t. Cecilia, and the Transfiguration, would incline one to believe that there are fewer pictures of Raphael's own execution than is generally imagined, and that much of what is ascribed to him in the heavy, charged style at the Farnesina and other places may, with more justice, be placed to the account of Giulio Romano, Gio. Francesco Penni and his other disciples, who probably, by working after the small drawings of their master, unavoidably introduced much of their manner and want of skill in the enlarging of them. This was evidently the case in the Battle of Constantine; the style of Raphael's drawing for this subject, which is at the palace Borghese, is much more chaste, pure, and correct than that of the large picture which was, after his death, executed from it by Giulio.

With respect to the mere drawing, our famous Cartoons are very unequal; the comparative feebleness and inferiority of many parts of them verify what Vasari relates, that Raphael's scholar, Gio. Francesco Penni, was much employed in the execution of this work; although in another place Vasari intimates that they were all of Raphael's own hand: however, this must be understood as to the formation of the design, in which unquestionably they are amongst the most vigorous and exemplary productions of art.

The style of drawing and character of the execution of these Cartoons is nearly the same with that of the Port of Ostea and Incendio del Borgo *, and differs from that of the School of Athens, Sacrament, and the others, in that it is less detailed, and of a more enlarged and robust kind. This change in Raphael's style of design, and his desire of making a nearer approach to Michelangelo's manner, is very confidently asserted by Vasari and others; however, those who may be inclined to doubt whether any such change took place, may, with truth, affirm that there are no drawings or studies of Raphael to be found which authorise the notice of this change †; that all his drawings, as well those found in

* In the Vatican. — W.

† The change is from his Florentine to his Roman style, and what this change was is evident from a comparison of the "Dispute on the Sacrament" with the "School of Athens" and the "Heliodorus:" not that this change can be attributed solely to the influence of Michelangelo, for Raphael must have been familiar with his style while at Florence, from his acquaintance with the "Cartoon of Pisa." It is, however, the

Crozat's collection, as those made use of by Mark Antonio and Ugo da Carpi, in which are the Murder of the Innocents, and others for those very Cartoons, are all in the same manner, and correspond exactly with the style of those fresco pictures, the St. Cecilia, and those parts of the Transfiguration which are undoubtedly of his own execution. It is highly probable, from the different degrees of ability employed in those Cartoons, that Gio. da Udine and other disciples of Raphael, were concerned in them, as well as Penni. It is easy to conceive that the alteration and enlargement of the manner took place when those disciples copied the small drawings in large, and that Raphael, when he worked upon several parts of the Cartoons, contented himself with retouching, and would not be at the pains of altering the outlines already made, more especially as the work was upon so perishable a material, and intended for nothing more than the exemplar of another work.* Even this was more solicitude than he appears to have bestowed upon the Farnesina and some of his other frescoes.

The Paul Preaching at Athens has but few faults in the drawing and execution. The group of hearers in the second plan are particularly well executed, without any feebleness, and though nothing exquisite, might very well pass for a negligent production of Raphael's own hand, except in some parts of the marking of the back and least consequential heads. The characters and proportions are well, neither

difference of style between the "Dispute on the Sacrament" and the "Heliodorus," that the pope, Julius II., must have alluded to in the following interesting remark which he made to Sebastiano del Piombo: — "Look at the works of Raphael, who, when he had seen the works of Michelangelo, suddenly forsook the manner of Perugino, and approached as near as he could to that of Michelangelo: but he is terrible, as you see; one can do nothing with him." The last words refer to the *character*, not the style, of Michelangelo. The passage quoted is in a letter of Sebastiano's to Michelangelo when in Florence. The letter is dated Rome, October 15. 1512. — *Gaye, Carteggio Inedito d'Artisti*, Ap. vol. ii. p. 489. — W.

* For tapestries to be hung round the wall of that portion of the Sistine Chapel called the Presbyterium. They were originally ten in number, and were arranged five on each side of the altar. The lost cartoons are: the Stoning of St. Stephen. Paul in Prison at Philippi, and the Conversion of St. Paul. They were executed for Leo X. in 1515 and 1516. — W.

charged nor wanting in elevation. There is little worth particularising either for excellence or deficiency in the drawing and execution of the Charge to Peter.

The figure of Ananias is a happy instance of drawing as a whole; the parts lie very well together, and the general forms, particularly in the head, back, and other extremities (except the right foot), are admirably well felt and understood. The opposite heads of the astonished man and woman are exceedingly well defined as to passion and character, as is also the apostle distributing the money. The execution of this last figure is remarkably mellow and good. The centre group of the apostles is feeble and bad in a very great degree, particularly the apostle pointing up to heaven, which for drawing and execution can hardly be worse.

There is nothing feeble or defective in the Cartoon of the Elymas, except perhaps in the figure advancing to look at him; the marble back-ground has great verity and gusto; the Lictor's head in the light, and the profile head, pointing to Elymas, are excellently well rendered as to execution, verity of effect, and even hue of colour.

In the proportions and mere forms, the figures in the Draught of Fishes, are sufficiently accurate and well: in all other respects they are ordinary, very ill managed, dense, earthy, and hard; the fishes, and even the fowls, are much better executed, and from the soft reflex lights interspersed in their chiaro-scuro have an air of verity that is much wanting in the other parts.

The Apostles at Lystra is of a much more exalted taste of forms and drawing. There is nothing very faulty, and even feeble in the execution. The arm of the man holding the ox, though somewhat charged and heavy, is notwithstanding of a good taste as to form, which is the case throughout the picture, even in those parts where the proportions are most exaggerated.

The Peter and John Healing the Cripple is in all the parts of its execution by much a more perfect work than any of the others; the zest of character and forms are very exquisite; the shaded parts are broad, tender, and well conducted, being happily softened by the reflex lights on their extreme edges, which give them a fine taste of rilievo and convexity, that is wanting in all the other Cartoons, where, ge-

nerally speaking, the shadows appear rather to resemble dirty, discoloured parts, than to be the portions of a surface in shade. The very noble and urbane air of all the other heads is admirably set off by the heads of the two cripples, which, though of a more gross and less sentimental physiognomy, have yet nothing mean in them, but, on the contrary, are large, grand, and important, though composed of parts more material than spiritual. Peter's foot is admirable for its Titianesque hue of colour, as well as for its form. The cripple's hand and wrist are also of an exquisite taste of drawing, and even the ornaments on the twisted columns of a masterly and beautiful execution. Where there is so much and such great excellence, one cannot bestow attention on the faults in the child behind the column, and a few other trifling particulars.* But as in our next discourse on *composition* we shall have occasion to enter upon the consideration of that excellence which more properly characterises those Cartoons, we shall leave them for the present, and proceed to remark, that,

Titian's style of drawing is not remarkable for any excellence. In this part of his art he had but little selection, and was closely attached to whatever he saw that was not grossly faulty in the nature that fell in his way. His forms, therefore, though well enough rendered, are generally imperfect. Titian was ideal and scientific only in his colouring. On the contrary,

Correggio's taste of drawing is very ideal, but as his ideas were not always well and solidly founded, his truth of drawing is frequently incorrect and affected, from over-much delicacy, grace, and sentiment; or swelling and overcharged,

* The student must bear in mind that all the above remarks are upon the *execution* of the cartoons, that is, on their *material* part, which is not the work of Raphael, or at least a small part of it only. These works are *great*, not on account of their execution, but on account of their extraordinary or unrivalled excellence as compositions, their profound sentiment, and general grandeur of style. Yet as designs also, in the wider sense, they are among the greatest works of modern art; for as to the general arrangement of their parts, and the style or gusto of their forms, they are of the highest quality of art. It is to be regretted that Barry did not show their merits in *design*, as industriously as he has pointed out their faults in *drawing*. His criticism on the design of these works is a practical dereliction from the principles he has himself laid down in his second lecture. — W.

from an unskilful pursuit of dignity and superior character. These excesses are more apparent in his large compositions, in the Dome, and at St. John's at Parma, than in his oil pictures.* In those large works, his views seem to have been concentered in producing one general, grand effect, and he has succeeded to admiration. The particular figures, characters, and expressions, are better attended to in his oil pictures, where his too great spirit and impetuosity is much moderated by his more frequent opportunities of revising and correcting. In his Madonna della Scudella, the drawing is bad in many places, and is even wanting in the common general proportion. If this picture was not so admirably and powerfully conducted in all the other parts, I should, from the feebleness of the drawing, have concluded it to have been a juvenile work of Correggio's, because his other famous oil picture at Parma, of the St. Jerome, affords convincing proof that he was an excellent draftsman, intelligent in proportions, and even singularly skilful in the proper and variegated application of them. The Madonna and the Magdalen are both exceedingly beautiful, are both remarkable for elegance and delicacy, and are, notwithstanding, essentially different, and the characters are accurately discriminated from each other throughout both the forms. The beauty, grace, and interesting sensibility of these and other female figures of Correggio, strongly show how short Raphael was of perfection in this class of figures. The taste of drawing in the head, body, and arm of the St. Jerome is very correct, the anatomy perfectly well understood, and great address is shown in that beautiful variety of contour produced by the elegant diversity of position in those parts: the leg is somewhat too plump and round, and does not correspond happily with the knotty, dry, and marked character of the other parts. Perhaps the foot of the Magdalen, also, does not perfectly correspond with the

* The frescoes of the church of San Giovanni represent the Ascension of Christ, and were commenced in 1520, when Correggio was in his twenty-seventh year. The frescoes of the Duomo or cathedral represent the Assumption of the Virgin; they were commenced in or shortly after 1522, and were left unfinished by Correggio: they were completed by his pupil, Giorgio Gandini. The Cav. Toschi is now preparing an admirable set of plates from these frescoes. —W.

character of the hands, yet so great is the excellence of these two figures, that I have but little scruple in ranking them with any thing that has appeared since the revival of the arts. As every excellence borders upon some deformity —the simple upon the cold and inanimate; the bold and expressive upon the blustering and overcharged; and the graceful upon the *precieuse* and affected; and as the transitions from the one to the other consist in the imprudent and indiscreet application of the *poco piu, o poco meno*, the little more or little less—so it could not well be otherwise but that the beginnings of that exaggeration called *manner* will be found nearly coeval with every kind of excellence which depends upon selection and sentiment, and sometimes even occasionally existing in the same person. Lorenzo Ghiberti appears to have been the first in whom there is any indication of exaggeration of manner: from a desire of avoiding the dryness and inanimation of his predecessors, it is no wonder that he shows a small degree of over-attention in displaying the bendings at the elbows, wrist, fingers, and other articulations, and in the projection of the brows, the frontal, and other muscles. This is even still more visible in some of the prophets, and a few other figures of Michelangelo, and they both adopted it to give the figure more motion, life, spirit, sentiment, or grandeur. Zucchero, and others of his time, spoiled and overcharged such parts of Michelangelo's manner as they were able to adopt; and Sprangher, Goltzius*, and other madmen, have finally rendered it monstrous and ridiculous.

Parmigiano's taste of design is often an improvement both on Michelangelo and Correggio. He frequently possesses the intelligence and spirit of the one, and the sentiment, grace, and sweetness of the other. The heads of Michelangelo's figures are seldom remarkable for beauty; they are but poorly furnished with hair, which gives them a poverty and meanness. They are often squatted down on the trunk by the foreshortening of the neck, which is apt to give a heaviness to the whole, and his drapery, when he has drapery, is inartificial, heavy, and badly cast. In all these particulars Parmigiano is often highly excellent. In general

* Celebrated German painters of the latter part of the sixteenth century. — W.

his figures have much spirit and energy of action. They are often singularly beautiful, and almost always graceful. The articulations of the joints show great agility and ease; the trunk is athletic yet light, as there is a fine discrimination between the strength of the essential parts of the thorax, and the lightness of those of the abdomen, which are divested of all useless corpulency. His limbs are of a beautiful length and lightness; his length of neck is often of great advantage, as it raises the head nobly above the trunk, and his plenitude of hair is elegantly dishevelled. Though these beauties are generally found in the figures of Parmigiano, yet it must be confessed that they are sometimes carried to the extreme and caricatura, particularly in his extremities, in the movements and grace of action, which (although the seat of his predominating excellence) are yet frequently overpowered by too much spirit. His famous Madonna at the Palace Pitti* would stand unrivalled for a masterly precision of drawing, divine beauty, character, sentiment, elegance, and graceful action, were it not that some of those perfections are a *little* overcharged, to the prejudice of the simplicity of nature and truth. However, its excellence is so great that my heart smites me when I pass this censure on those particular exuberances, for they cannot be considered as affectations, which would imply assumed qualities, not really felt. In the church of the Steccata at Parma is the last work of Parmigiano; it is not only his best work, but the only one in which he might have had an opportunity of fairly throwing out his whole strength in a manly competition with his predecessors; and from the castigated style, vast ability and perfection of his outset, which now remains, there is every reason to believe that Italian art would have acquired a considerable accession of character, and of the highest kind, had this work been completely executed. After the loss of his intelligent patrons and happy situation, by the sacking of Rome, the patience of this great man must have been much exercised, in being perhaps obliged (and in the vigour of life) to

* Known as the Madonna del Collo lungo, that is, with the long neck; it is certainly most disagreeably long. These long necks are a characteristic defect with Parmigiano. The Pitti Madonna has been engraved in Landon's Outlines. — *Vies et Œuvres des Peintres*, &c. — W.

quit the work he had just begun at Parma, in order to seek for a subsistence from alchemy.* However, the Adam, the Moses, and the female figures which surround the band, were all he executed, and can never be too much admired. The action of the Moses is highly animated, even to enthusiasm; the Torso is perhaps a little too light in the upper part, the head and arms are well understood as to character, and admirably drawn: there is a union of the majesty, and even terrible dignity of Michelangelo, with the discretion of Raphael when in his best manner, and what is more than all, there is a feeling of the *venustas* of the antique, which is traceable throughout this figure, as well as those of the females, and they are executed with an ease, spirit, and masterly finish, that is only to be found in Parmigiano. The drapery of those female figures is light, proper, and executed with a felicity superior to any thing of the kind, even in Raphael, who is in general beyond all men in this respect.

Another style of design, different from all these, appears to have had its rise in Lodovico Carracci. He has nothing of the swelling contour and spreading toes of Michelangelo. He seems rather to follow individual nature closely, and to give but little into the ideal. His figures are meagre, dry, and bony, and their toes are even pressed close together and ride, as is seen in the feet of those that have been accustomed to wear tight shoes. His St. Jerome, in the church of San Martino Maggiore, is an exception. This admirable figure is in a large, noble style; the naked body of the saint is very like that of the Laocoon, and exceedingly well made out. This and some other of his works show that he was well able to avoid monotony of character, but in by far the greater part of what he has done he is generally too fond of the dry, lean (and if such a term be allowable) squarish character and outline. However, his objects being, for their kind, always rendered with so much intelligence, truth, and

* Parmigiano was only twenty-three years old at the sack of Rome, and was engaged at that very time on the Saint Jerome, now in the National Gallery. The frescoes of the Steccata were *contracted for* in 1531, but were not commenced until five years later. He was a dissipated character, and the author of his own misfortunes. He died in 1540, in the thirty-seventh year of his age. See his *Life*, by Affò, Parma, 1784. — W.

nature, they are always pleasing, though not in so high a degree as they would have been, had the nature he followed been of a more noble choice. He was probably led into this choice of nature from an idea of its being more proper and correspondent to the recluse, castigated, sanctified character, and it is likely, that for the same reason, his manner has in this been so very generally followed; but still he might have preserved the leanness, though he raised the character and variegated it more. Design was but one of the many desiderata Lodovico had in view. He and his two relations, Agostino and Annibal, had judiciously adopted the idea of uniting all the excellencies of the art which were scattered in their predecessors, who had separately cultivated the perfection of each: the time was now ripe for it, after colouring and chiaroscuro had been completed by the successful labours of Titian and Correggio. Of this main view of the Carracci and their disciples, in happily uniting all the parts of painting, we shall hereafter have occasion to take more particular notice. But to proceed with our present subject; Agostino's style of design is better selected from nature, more large and noble than that of Lodovico, and, not to be too particular, the great perfections of many parts of his Communion of St. Jerome, and Assumption of the Virgin must make every man regret that he should throw himself away from that for which he was so admirably fitted, in order to cultivate engraving, which suited better with those interruptions and little intervals of leisure in which his useless associations with what is called high company had ridiculously enveloped him.

As to Annibal, his style of design, like that of Agostino, is of a noble and enlarged kind, and savours but little of the poverty of defective individual nature. When he came to Rome he had ample opportunity of giving the last hand to those studies he had so happily advanced by all he had seen in Lombardy. His style of drawing, which was before great and animated, received a new occasion of perfection from Michelangelo, from Raphael, and above all from the antique, which opened new sources of ideal beauty, of which he had before but faint glimmerings. An advantageous change of style took place accordingly, and although in the noble work which he then executed at the Farnese Gallery

his improved abilities appear in great splendour, yet there is just reason to believe that in his subsequent works he would have improved the admirable style he had just adopted into still higher perfection, had not his death been brought on prematurely by the mean-spirited, brutal conduct of the nobleman*, upon whom his attention and labour had been so vexatiously wasted.†

* This is an error. Annibale Carracci lived five years after the completion of the Farnese gallery, and he was treated like a gentleman by the Cardinal Farnese during the four years (1600–4) that he was engaged upon it. He had the usual table allowance of a courtier for himself and two servants, and a monthly salary of ten scudi, about two guineas. In addition to this, he received at the completion of the work a *present* (regalo) of 500 scudi. Annibale received, therefore, for this work about 1000 scudi, or about 200 guineas, besides maintenance for himself and servants for four years. Two hundred guineas at Rome in the commencement of the seventeenth century would, perhaps, be equal to 1000 in the present day in London. Raphael was not paid so much money for the ten *Cartoons*, to say nothing for the maintenance. See the Notices of Annibale Carracci in the works of Bellori and Baglione. — *Vite de' Pittori*, &c., and in the editor's Catalogue of the National Gallery. — W.

† The academicians and associates having been lately indulged with the opportunity of inspecting the Italian part of the Orleans' Collection, I had no small satisfaction, on this interview with my old acquaintance and benefactors, in indulging the hope, that what had so long been the object of my ardent wishes would now probably be soon obtained, nay, would certainly be obtained, if rightly managed with a becoming skill and dignity on the part of the Academy. Who can question it, that has a proper conception of the high, generously-cultivated spirit of those out of the Academy who might co-operate in a transaction so essentially necessary for the advancements of the arts, for their dependent manufactures, for the public entertainment and glory, and for the fair-dealing, and the justice that is due to you, young gentlemen, who receive your education in this Institution of a Royal Academy? Although many, and some of the best of those pictures, are already disposed of by private contract, yet I should not despair, if this matter be properly managed. O, how necessary and salutary is true greatness of mind in all leading departments, and how universally will every thing wither and decay without it! nothing, no artificial dexterity or management can supply its place. Poor Sir Joshua Reynolds! God be with him; were he living he could find a remedy, and I must, and will say, that the occasion ought not to be lost, and surely will not, cannot, and therefore I think I may indulge myself with the satisfaction of reflecting, that you, young gentlemen, will receive substantial and extensive benefit and advantage from an attentive consideration of many of the masterly, truly noble performances in this collection. In the very article on which I had been speaking, the castigated, admir-

These important principles of design or drawing, which either separately or more united have been pursued with such various degrees of success, by the great restorers of modern art, are (as I have had frequent occasion to observe) to be found in a still higher degree, and with a much more perfect union, in some of the admirable remains of Grecian sculpture. When we reflect on the various degrees and arrangements of bulk and heaviness that indicate an unfitness for action and agility, and the degrees of levity, incompatible with strength; the Torso of the Belvedere will appear the most complete, perfect system, or arrangement of parts, that can possibly be imagined, for the idea of corporeal force, which it was intended to represent. The character of all the parts most perfectly corresponds with each other, and with the general idea; and if the length and taper form of the thighs are calculated to obtain the victory in the foot race, which Hercules won at Olympia, yet their agility appears more the consequence of force than lightness, and they are in perfect unison with the loins, abdomen, chest, and back, which exhibit a power that well might crush Antæus. In a comparison with this sublime vestige, the Hercules Farnese does not appear a stronger, though a much heavier figure. It seems rather an idea of strength than of force, of mere stationary strength than of active force, and has, perhaps, more of the Atlas than of the Hercules, particularly from the loins down; but it is possible that a great part of what I least admire in the general appearance of this Farnese Hercules may be owing to the legs, which are

able style of design of Lodovico Carracci, there is in the dead figure of the Christ (No. 53.), a specimen in that way, the happiest that can be imagined, and assuredly equal to any thing of his at Bologna. I hope some time hence to have a little leisure for some general remarks[1] on a few of those specimens of the old masters which enrich this collection[2]

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[1] Published in his *Works*, 2 vols. 4to.: London, 1809. — W.

[2] The Orleans Collection was brought to London in 1792, and was disposed of by private and public sales in 1798–1800. The principal works contained in it are engraved in *La Galerie du Palais Royal*. The dead Christ of Lodovico Carracci, referred to, is in the collection of the Earl of Carlisle, at Castle Howard. Several other pictures of the collection are now in the National Gallery. — W.

modern*, and by [Guglielmo della] Porta, an artist of but little skill, as appears abundantly from his large figure below stairs in the living academy.

Some ingenious artists have endeavoured to account mechanically for the superior perfections of the celebrated Greek statues, by the characteristic nature of lines and angles, uniformity and variety; and they have reasoned after the following curious manner: —"That perfection consists in the variegated composition of straight, convex, and concave lines and angles; that the straight gives simplicity, the convex greatness, and the concave elegance and lightness; that the waving line gives beauty, and the serpentine or twisted grace. That the Apollo Belvedere is composed entirely of very gentle convex lines, of very small obtuse angles, and of planes, or level parts; but the soft convex predominates. It being necessary that the character of this divine figure should express force, grandeur, and delicacy, its author has demonstrated the first by the convex contours, the second by their uniformity, and the third by the waving lines. The obtuse angles and light inflexions form the waving line, and by their union is shown sufficient force and dignity. In the Laocoon the convex lines predominate, and the forms are angular, as well where they indent, or fall in as where they swell out, by which means the agitation of the expression is manifested: because in this way the nerves and tendons of the figure, which are much strained, are rendered more visible. The straight lines being opposed to the convex and concave, by which is shown that the figure is agitated. The sculptor of the Hercules has found out a taste altogether different; he has made the forms of the muscles convex and round, to show that they were real flesh, but the line of indenting, or entry, is straight, to signify that those parts were nervous and meagre, and by this is expressed the character of force and strength. In the Gladiator there is a mixture of the forms of the Hercules and the Laocoon, because the muscles in action are agitated, and those in repose are short and round, like those of the

* This figure now stands upon its own legs (see note, *ante*) The restorations of Guglielmo della Porta were from the knees to the ankles only, inclusive. The *feet* were found with the body and pedestal. See Goethe, *Italienische Reise*, 1787. — W.

Hercules. In the Torso of the Belvedere, a work merely ideal, all the beauties of the other statues are united, because it has a variety so perfect, that it is almost imperceptible; its plane, or flat parts, are not to be discerned but by comparing them with the round, and these with the other; the angles are less than the flat or the round, and could not be distinguished, were it not for the little beds of which they are composed." Thus much I thought it proper to lay before you, as a specimen of the mechanical rules which one of these writers has laid down for the conduct of design. Perhaps these rules may be of some use in the arbitrary conjunctions of composition; but they appear to me to be very inconclusive, and much out of their place, when thus applied to prescribed forms, which can result solely from their propriety and fitness to the character, and from actions corresponding with the sentiment and occasion. Besides their utter misapplication, these multiplied little rules seem likely to generate manner, to substitute the artificial in the place of the natural, and to distract, or occupy too much of that attention which ought to be bestowed on matters of more importance: and still farther, they appear altogether unnecessary, for when these higher matters of the character and action are properly attended to, they produce all that can be sought after by any rules, without the incumbrance of their application: for instance, the character of a beautiful female, or of an athletic male body, and all the circumstances of its action, as sitting or dancing, being judiciously determined, the form of all the parts, their relative swellings, cavities, angles, or planes, must follow necessarily, and in their precise and exact degree; their conformity with the character and action is the only arbiter that can be admitted, and nothing is left to the choice of the artist. The contour of a stretched out arm must depend upon the character of the arm, whether it be that of an Apollo or a Hercules; and upon the business about which it is employed, whether pushing or pulling, or merely stretched out—for in all these cases the contour will be essentially different; the same must inevitably hold of all other characters and actions.

Sameness or repetition, being always disgusting, the pursuit of variety enters necessarily into all the concerns of art; and this variety is sufficiently and fully effected by diversi

fying the characters, actions, or positions of figures, which may be done ad infinitum. Every thing in quality and circumstances has its own peculiarity. The aged, or the inactive, admit of less variety of flexion and motion than the young and vigorous; and in a subject so complex as the human body, where motion, or transition from one action to another must be progressive and successional, variety in the position and aspect of those parts follow as the necessary consequence. In turning about, for instance, the mind, eyes, and head go foremost, and the body and lower extremities follow; hence the aspect of the central, or transverse diameters of the head, shoulders, and haunches, will be variegated from each other in the degree adequate to the occasion, and produce those curves or spiral lines of variety (or of beauty and grace, as they have been called) which run along the spine, or linea alba, from the pubis to the point between the clavicles, as is seen in the Laocoon, and, more delicately, in the gentler transitions of the body of Michelangelo's Christ at the Minerva, or the Torso at the Belvedere.

When I speak of the superior intelligence of design in the antique statues, I would be understood to mean a few only. The Torso of the Belvedere is as to perfection really *unique*. There is nothing that can be put into the same class with it. The Laocoon, the Apollo, the Venus, the fighting Gladiator, the Farnese Hercules, and a few others, come next, and can hardly be overrated, and there is a general purity of conception observable in most of the others, even to the lowest class; but notwithstanding it is equally true, that whether from laziness, the inability to distinguish the good from the bad, or from whatever cause, but there is a very general propensity to vague indiscriminate admiration of them, which is likely to be exceedingly mischievous, and has already been productive of very bad consequences; and it is very observable that this has gradually increased in proportion as the sound principles of design fell into disuse. It will become you to beware of this abuse. As the perfection of art is your only object, you ought to examine every thing with equal weights and measures; ancient or modern should be equally admirable or indifferent to you, as they are more or less conformable to the truth and perfection of things.

You will then, in the spirit of just discrimination, restore some figures of Michelangelo, of Puget, Girardon, and others, to their just and proper rank after the Apollo, the Laocoon, Gladiator, and other antiques of the second class, and far beyond the others of the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth. It is hardly necessary to apprise you, that although great part of the remains of ancient art may be feebly executed, and of little consequence with respect to the design, yet many of those vestiges are really invaluable, and worthy our most serious attention and study on other accounts, as they convey, perhaps, the only certain information relative to the usages, ceremonies, and mystical doctrines of those remote and heroic ages. The important discoveries which have been recently made in this track of study ought to induce us to hope every thing from the farther prosecution of it. But as the ob ect of our attention at present is to discriminate between the examples of more or less perfect design, it will be for our purpose to observe, that although the statue of Meleager, with the boar's head, is a happy specimen of the ancient manner of representing their heroes naked, with no adventitious circumstances of embellishment but such as were necessary to manifest their identity, or their celebrated actions; in other respects this is a figure of great mediocrity, and probably an ancient copy; in some parts of the profile view, it is too lathy and slender, perhaps from being made for a niche, and the legs not only want beauty, but are even gummy and ill formed. That in the Antinous at the Capitol, though the head is beautiful, round, and tender, the body is of a different character, hard, and tending to the dry and straight.* That even in the Apollo Belvedere, sublime and beautiful as it undoubtedly is, yet perhaps the right clavicle and shoulder want magnitude to correspond with the other parts; and whether owing to the legs having been broken off above the ankle, but the ends of the tibia and fibula which form the inner and outer ankle do not seem to be in their proper places, as they are in the Venus de' Medici, the Borghese Faun, &c. The end of the tibia or inner ankle is in nature higher and more forward upon the foot, that of the fibula or outward ankle lower and nearer the heel. Thus

* These opinions are at variance with those of many good judges respecting these two statues.— W.

superior to vulgar prejudices, you will be swayed only by liberal and enlarged motives. The love of that excellence you are pursuing in your own studies will incline you to admire and to venerate the abilities of your predecessors, whether ancient or modern, and of whatever country, and could it be also extended to your contemporaries and rivals, it would be still more honourable to yourselves.

Before I conclude, it may not be foreign to our purpose to observe still further that drawing must not be considered as an end, but as a means only by which the painter can be securely conducted to the end proposed. Though it be the principal and most essential part of his art*, yet it is but a part, and not the whole. For although the chiaroscuro, which accompanies what is called a finished drawing, produces a totality in itself, yet this totality is nothing more than an imperfect substitute for the totality of painting, which comprehends the whole natural appearance, as well in the colours of objects, as in their forms and degradation of effects. These imperfect substitutes of painting, which are called finished drawings, and which comprehend the whole of what is proposed by the engraver's art, are to be considered as consisting of three parts.

The first and most important is that which regards the essential forms, the characters, the expressions, spirit, and vivacity; the second that which regards the rilievo and truth of the effects in the light and shade and degradation of objects; and the third that which regards the handling or mechanical treatment, which, though it be of infinitely inferior consideration, yet it ought to be conducted in a workmanlike and becoming manner, whatever mode of execution be adopted, whether lines or washed tints, on paper or on copper. The works of Audran, Edelink, Frey, Pontius, Vorsterman, Cars, and all the masterly engravers, afford examples of the soundest practice in this way. Every thing of importance is rendered *con amore* with the highest skill and assiduity, and their conduct in the more mechanical part, the treatment of lines, appears with a noble, skilful simplicity only to follow as the consequence of a practised and well-exercised hand. Every part has its own peculiar treatment, whether fleshy, muscular, or nervous. Whether you consider

* That is, of the mechanical, or executive part of the art. — W.

the cattle of Berchem and Vischer, or the docks, foreground, trees, and landscape of Lawrence*, Vivares, and Chatelin, it is all drawing, and no other taste of lines is adopted than what springs altogether from the essential form and material of the several objects. This admirable detail of execution, attached only to the truth and characteristic nature of objects, was still improvable into any force of effect and depth of tone; but the experience of all ages shows how difficult it has been in the improvement of arts to stop in the right place. Folly and ostentation will go further: unskilful men, blind to the real intrinsic beauties of their art, which they have but ill studied, are very liable to mistake the means for the end, and so employ their whole solicitude in the pursuit of lines, as a principal sought for on its own account, where, without any higher reference, they may have an opportunity of exhibiting the unnecessary difficulties and curious niceties of stroke and execution which, like the graces often met with amongst fiddlers, only serve to perplex and destroy the groundwork of expression, character, and sentiment which they so absurdly attempt to illustrate. To mention one out of many instances that might be given, the St. Geneviève of Balechou (which has unhappily been often imitated by young engravers), has neither truth of form, rilievo of light and shadow, nor any thing that one might expect in an engraving from so able a draftsman as Vanloo. Besides a great deficiency in all the parts of drawing, this print is remarkable for nothing but a curious, difficult, and idle manner of cutting copper. As neither the form nor rilievo of natural or painted objects can afford any thing to warrant this ridiculous carved work and engrailing, and as nothing of it is to be found in the works of those eminent living engravers whom the public have long known and justly admired, one might be at a loss to account for the introduction of this absurd affectation, were it not for the natural propensity of weak minds to distinguish themselves in manœuvring with the point or graver, when they are incapable of making a better and more manly use of them.

Thus much may (for the present) be observed upon Design, a term which, in its general acceptation, comprehends the whole conception or idea expressed in painting and

* Andrè Laurent, sometimes called Lawrence. — W.

sculpture by the imitation of real or possible objects, and in its more confined sense, as applied to the contours, terminations, or lines by which the whole and parts of objects are bounded in modelling or drawing. It comprises all the necessary knowledge of the anatomical construction, the beauties, sublimities, and peculiarities of form in all the possible and actual discriminations of character; the proportions that appertain to each, and the degree of sensibility, passion, and emotions of the soul which govern and display themselves in the bodily exertions.

I should most heartily rejoice to see these principles of sound design pursued upon an extensive, liberal plan; persuaded, as I am, that any man properly qualified by nature and education, who would generously employ his whole undivided attention to it, might derive advantages from the information of the eighteenth century that would infallibly enable him to carry this ideal and most essential part of the art far beyond the point at which our predecessors had left it two hundred years ago. Though truth obliges me to insist upon the practicability of this, yet charity and humanity withhold me from wishing that many of you should devote yourselves to make the experiment, as mere capacity, when you had attained to it, would and could avail nothing without the necessary opportunities for exerting yourselves; and our country affords so blank a prospect in those opportunities, that they do not appear to be sufficient for the continued necessary exercise of even one man's talents, much less for so many as this academy is likely to produce. Hogarth's prophecy is amply fulfilled; and, however light this matter may appear to others, yet, like the frogs in the fable, you will, I fear, one day find it of serious consequence to you. If, unhappily, opportunities of elevated exertion should be wanting to you on the one hand; on the other, you may rest assured that neither yourselves nor country can gain any great reputation in the eighteenth century by the employing your talents on subordinate, mechanical things. This could be expected only in the early times, before the mechanic was completed, and when art was a mere novelty. Disagreeable as it is, yet duty requires me to lay your situation thus fairly before you in the outset, whilst there may be time to make a prudent retreat without dishonour; for, as much must be

done by every man before he can possibly do well, if there be little or no likelihood of obtaining this necessary exercise, he must be a bad man indeed who could wish to see your capabilities and talents mouldering, from disuse and want of employment. And it is very certain, that if artists do but little in their profession, the folly, laziness, and malevolence of a great part of mankind will never examine whether these artists were wanting to their country, or their country to them: it is generally determined in the easiest and most expeditious way, by supposing the artist to have but little genius. However, we owe a love to the art itself, and it will become us to rejoice in its advancement, whether we shall be allowed the honour of being instrumental to it or not; as perhaps the glory of obtaining this palm is reserved for some other new people, where the shoot of vigour and virtue may have ample room to expand themselves; where that grandeur and elevation of soul which can best qualify the artist for the sublimities of his profession, will not disqualify him with the great and opulent, who only can employ him, and where art may be blessed with a long career before it is blighted by those baneful dissipations, want of magnanimity, and hatred of virtue which ever did, and, it is to be feared, ever will characterise a corrupt and declining people.

In my next discourse I shall endeavour to call your attention to *Composition*, or *Arrangement*.

Lecture IV. — On Composition.

Gentlemen,

The composition of a picture, whether it regards the circumstances of an action, carried on by many figures, or whether it only comprehends the detailed members and adjuncts of a single figure, or any other conjunction of parts, forming an integral or whole, whatever be its nature, it is indispensably required that it should be reducible to *one* subject or action, and to *one* individual instant of time in this action.

As every action has many points of time, some of which are better shown by *words*, and, consequently, fall more within the province of poetry, the painter's business is to avoid these, and to employ his ingenuity upon such moments only as may sustain themselves, independent of words, and carry all their elucidation and energy in their exterior appearance with a force and precision that is in vain attempted by any language of mere words. This is the stronghold of our art, and here poetry would be as tame and defective as were those old painters who employed different points of time in the same view, and made their figures carry on successive conversations by putting labels in their mouths. The painter's choice of this advantageous moment is of the most essential consideration, and must depend upon that thorough feeling of the whole of this subject, which is the ultimate result of whatever physical, ethical, poetical, or other knowledge he may happen to possess.

Of the numberless possible ways which may be employed in the collocation and arrangement of the several objects of a picture, that must undoubtedly be the best which most immediately arises out of the very nature of the subject itself, comprehends its greatest scope and energy, is best adapted to give the just value and importance to the principal and most interesting circumstances, and is least encumbered with foreign, useless, impertinent, dead matter, which every thing must be that does not contribute in its general and necessary co-operation.

The composition should appear the true efflux of a mind so heated and full of the subject as to lose all regard and attention to every thing foreign. Enthusiasm, genius, taste, all the faculties should here concentrate; for if ever they be available in any part of a picture, it is in the happy arrangement and apposite collocation of those principal and interesting materials and circumstances upon which the becoming beauty, pathos, or dignity of the subject depends; since the particular expressions, passions, actions, or gestures of the several personages of the painter's *drama* can have no value but what is derived from their particular adaptation to the propriety of each character, and to the becoming part of greater or lesser interest, which ought to connect it with the scene. In a word, nothing is admissible which does not co-

operate. Every co-operating object, action, or circumstance must appear in its own proper and most available situation, and in no other. Intention must govern throughout, and nothing be left to chance.

It appears, then, young gentlemen, that in the necessary exercise of your profession, you will have frequent occasion to recur to your education at large; therefore, look to it in time. A shallow, contracted apprehension is incapable of conceiving the just latitude and extent of his subject, and not likely to see beyond the mere trite, superficial, and ordinary matters of vulgar observation. While the artist of mere imagination also will, without the necessary judgment and sound information, be like a hound of a bad nose, liable to be diverted from the true pursuit, and to waste his vigour in hunting down every trifle that starts in his way; and in either case your mechanical abilities can be but ill employed.

Thus, then, the desideratum (at least in all matters of elevated compositions) is, that the artist should possess a great and noble mind, of ability to penetrate the depth, entire compass and capability of his subject; to discern, in one view, all its possible circumstances; to select and unite whatever is most essential, most interesting, and of the greatest consequence to its energetic and happy elucidation; and to be able, at the same time, judiciously and severely to reject and suppress whatever useless exuberances may have arisen from the heat and fertility of his imagination.

In the discourse upon design, much has been argued respecting the necessity of interesting the spectator by the selection of beautiful, sublime, or other extraordinary characters. These are certainly valuable in themselves, independent of all other considerations; but this value is much increased when, to the native persuasion of such characters, there is added all those expressive incidents, coinciding associated energies, and concatenated graces of an ingenious and eloquent composition.

This eloquence of the painter's composition, which, like almost all the other parts of modern art, seems to have received so much efficacy and value from the deep researches of Leonardo da Vinci, is susceptible of the utmost conceivable force, extent, and variety, as is abundantly evident in the works of many of his successors who pursued the same

principles. Nothing of verbal language can be more copious, beautifully diffusive, and magnificent than the eloquence of Raphael's Dispute of the Sacrament; nothing can be more condensed and vehement in its address than his Elymas and Death of Ananias; than the Plague and Deluge of Poussin; the Dead Christ of [Lodovico] Carracci, in the Palais Royal*; the Possessed Boy, by Domenichino†; and, above all, the group of the Laocoon, in the Belvedere.

There is nothing can be attended with more substantial benefit to the young student than to familiarise himself with those models of eloquent composition which his profession affords, by endeavouring to investigate and to possess himself of all the reasons upon which those compositions were constructed, and why such and such identical actions, characters, circumstances, modes, degrees, and arrangements were introduced in preference to every other. By such studies the mind of the student will insensibly acquire an habitual greatness and expansion; and when it comes to think for itself, and to search out materials for its own works, vigour, propriety, and dignity will be the natural concomitants of whatever flows from it. This is the only use that can or ought to be made of the compositions of those great men who have gone before us; and in this sense you cannot bestow too much attention upon such compositions as the Paul Preaching at Athens, the Last Supper by Da Vinci, the Sick Alexander by Le Sueur, Le Brun's Tent of Darius and Passage of the Granicus, the Gathering of Manna, the Moses Striking Water from the Rock, the Confirmation, and a great many other works of Poussin, whose versatile genius, well-grounded judgment, and deep, as well as extensive elegant information have carried him with equal success through all the genera of composition.

Whatever be the main scope of the subject, and whatever materials it may with propriety afford, whether of the simple, pathetic, or heroic and sublime kind — the first and chief attention of the composition should be to dispose such materials in the manner best calculated to enforce and ennoble this main scope or end, which the subject proposes, and to

* Now at Castle Howard. — W.

† Fresco in the Chapel of San Nilo at Grotta Ferrata, near Frascati. — W.

reject or carry into the parts of least consequence whatever does not contribute to this end. For example, in the subject of Laocoon, the principal aim of the artists should be (as it has been) to impress upon the mind of the spectator those emotions of terror and pity which must arise from that climax of distress exhibited in the unavailing efforts of an agonizing father and his children, the children calling upon the father for assistance, and he upon Heaven that has abandoned him to his fate.

A second consideration of interest, and which greatly enforces the first, is the graceful, beautiful forms of the children, and the noble, vigorous, athletic figure of the father, which is admirably calculated to exhibit those convulsed gripings which agitate every part. If agreeable to the absurd wishes of some shallow critics, these sons of Laocoon had been of the same soft, pulpy texture as the children of Fiamingo, besides being fitter for the nursery than as attendants upon the altar, their little bladder-like forms would have been incapable of discovering any interior agitation. It may be further observed, that were these figures encumbered with drapery, it could have no relation to the main end: it would then be occupying space to no purpose, or, what is worse, to a bad purpose, as it must divert or divide the attention to inanimate things, foreign to the main end, and interrupt the unity of this expression of agony and distress, which should be pursued throughout. Besides the variety arising from the different ages and characters of these figures, their actions and positions are so diversified, that in every view of this admirable group the eye is presented with a combination of circumstances and aspects, so beautifully varied from each other, that it is difficult to say which is the most to be admired, the vehement, direct, and uniform address of the subject, or the graceful and skilfully variegated manner in which it is communicated.

Pietro da Cortona has treated this subject upon quite other principles. Blind as he was to all its grandeur, pathos, and real excellence, his composition was, as usual, thrown away upon what is, in many cases, mistakenly called the picturesque arrangement of heights and distances, lines, angles, and other mechanical, subordinate attentions; which may be of prime consequence in trifling subjects, but which,

in such cases as the present, should never be sought after but as aids and agreeable attendants upon those matters of higher consideration, which never enter the thoughts of unfeeling and mere mechanical fabricators of composition. Such men do but disgrace themselves in great subjects. The matters of art are suited to all capacities, when artists know how to make a prudent choice; from still life upwards every man might find something of a-piece with himself.

The Cartoon, in which is represented the death of Ananias, is another, and a most admirable example of expressive energetic composition. Raphael has here with great judgment and ingenuity so connected all the parts of his subject, as to afford the happiest illustration of this dreadful instance of divine vengeance. On one side of the apostles the people are bringing their substance for the common participation; on the other, it is distributed according to every man's occasion, and in the centre is exhibited the punishment of that voluntary fraud which Ananias had hypocritically attempted. The countenance and action of Saint Peter, who delivers the sentence, and of the other apostle who shows it to have come down from heaven; in a word, every part of the composition is skilfully expressive of the subject, even to the very railing which surrounds the apostles, and marks the common repository of this exemplary community.

The Elymas, the Paul at Athens, the Sacrifice at Lystra, the Murder of the Innocents, and almost the whole of those ten * designs which Raphael made for the tapestries of the pope's chapel, are in the same noble, energetic strain, and appear, as I have hinted before, amongst the best and most vigorous examples our art affords, of an expressive, judicious manner of treating compositions of the vehement and passionate kind.

Raphael has also produced the highest examples of excellence in the more copious and diffusive compositions. His picture of the Sacrament† is a lofty strain of divine, poetic enthusiasm; in which, with the utmost feeling and judg-

* See note, *ante*, p. 135. — W.

† The "Theology," in the Vatican, or what is commonly called the Dispute on the Sacrament. — W.

ment, he has happily linked together the sublimest theological ideas. The sacramental host, which is placed on the altar, immediately under, and apparently connected with the divine persons of the holy Trinity, forms a centre and a great uniting principal, which associates all parts of the composition, even in despite of a feeble defective chiaroscuro, and some other vestiges of the old Gothic manner; which, were they not borne down by the energy and unity of Raphael's ideas, would have gone near to the dissociating and maiming the general appearance of this composition. However, it is but just to remind you, that an inspection of the execution and manner of handling of the upper part and right side of this picture must immediately convince an artist, that it was the first which Raphael executed in the Vatican, and that by the time he had arrived at the left hand corner, this *feebleness* was quite vanished. Every thing in this most sublime of all Raphael's compositions, which undoubtedly it is, notwithstanding its defects, every thing, I say, tends to, and is regulated by, the expression of the subject. The whole importance of the celestial part of the composition, which seems, as it were, infused in the host on the altar, is what visibly gives occasion to all that beautiful variety of action, contemplation, love, and reverence, which are so animatedly expressed in the figures that surround it, and which is judiciously and feelingly made to coincide with the peculiar characters, dispositions, and ages of those profound doctors, sovereign pontiffs, and simple believers, which form this admirable group.

The same ability, but more equally sustained as to execution, is observable in the School of Athens, or, to speak more properly, in the Picture of Philosophy. The figures which form this great composition, not excepting even the portrait of Raphael's friend, the Duke of Urbino, all of them seem to have been introduced for the sole purpose of variegating the action, expression, and sentiment, his subject required; and the several gestures and modes of contemplation, explication, and attention, are not less admirable in their diversity than in their assimilation, as the same grave, dispassionate, philosophic aspect, is with a happy propriety sustained throughout. But whether it was from the want of any necessarily obvious, connecting principle in the nature

of philosophy itself, or from whatever cause, it is certain that a general concentrating principle of sentiment seems wanting: here appears no source of action, and the matter of the composition seems better connected and united than the spirit of it: for although the several ranges and groups of objects are much better united for the purposes of easy and collected vision than they are in the picture of Theology, yet, as a totality of expression, there is wanting that force and confederated sentiment, which operates so powerfully in the theological subject. The two advanced groups of the followers of Pythagoras and Archimedes are complete, independent in themselves, and seem to have little or no reference to any other part of the picture; altogether unconnected with Plato and Aristotle, who are in the interior and centre, and have been supposed, and were perhaps intended, to be a kind of principals in the composition. But these, and a few other trifling difficulties, may (as I said before) have arisen out of the very nature of the subject itself. It was perhaps impossible to introduce into the composition any obvious and sufficiently dignified thing, or circumstance, which might comprehend, concentrate, and help to specify the several attentions of these disciples of mere philosophical, human wisdom. The pronation of Aristotle's hand, and the finger pointing upwards of that of Plato, are happily expressive and characteristic; but are by no means sufficient pivots to sustain the whole sentiment of the composition.

These two compositions of Theology and Philosophy afford a most instructive and invaluable example of the conduct that should be adopted in such abstract comprehensive subjects of the painter's own creation, as are only circumscribed by the spirit and essence of things. When particular known personages are introduced, it would be advisable, for the satisfaction even of the little and least generous critics, that the artist should endeavour by some ingenious effort to obviate those anachronisms, of which Raphael made but little account. His desire of giving those subjects all their plenitude, and also of introducing all the famous men, who, in their several times, had distinguished themselves in each: and the scene being laid upon earth, and consequently in *time*, the anachronisms were of course

unavoidable. These compositions might, however, have been treated differently, either by not laying the scene in time, as is the case in the upper part of the Theology, or else by attaching himself to possible general incidents and characteristic personages, rather than to those who were particular and known. Instead of Epicurus (whose manners and doctrine were, according to Cicero, so inconsistent with each other) the indolent and selfish Epicureans might have been represented, and the Pyrrhonians, Stoics, and the other sects, might also have been characterised in a similar manner. And in that part of the Theology where the scene is laid upon earth (instead of S^t. Bonaventura, S^t. Jerome, Gregory, Aquinas, &c., who lived in times so removed from each other, and who might very well be placed in heaven) this terrestrial region might be reserved for the several ecclesiastical orders and communities; the pontifical and other dignitaries might be happily characterised; certain indications might be given of works of charity, penitence, and so forth, and yet all equally co-operate in the general action.

Thus, whether we allow ourselves the liberty of committing a few trifling anachronisms for the sake of some individual advantages; or whether we avoid them in order to obtain a greater or more consistent purity and unity of design; whichever way we may incline, it is evident, from those pictures of Raphael, that by a composition of possible general incidents, an ingenious and knowing man might represent law, medicine, or any other art or science of great and general utility. The spirit of ages or nations might be thus represented: you might give all the features of a base, servile, venal age — trifling, dissipated, and full of those mean, selfish hopes and fears which ultimately eradicate all virtue, private as well as public; or you might represent times more magnanimous and heroic. Thus you might do what, from its imagined impossibility, had been long regarded as one of the fabulous stories of antiquity — that is, you might make a portrait of the good people of England, which might appear at the same time cruel and merciful, wise, foolish, giddy, and so forth, as Parrhasius is said to have done of the people of Athens.

Those compositions of the general kind, where the fable,

story, or subject, is of the artist's own creation, may be extended to every conceivable action, with all the latitude of tragic, comic, or other poetry, and they are often susceptible of more pertinence and ethic application than those actions which are circumscribed by historical or other particular known facts. Of this kind is Poussin's Arcadia, the Flemish Feast in the Luxembourg, by Rubens*, almost the greatest part of Watteau's compositions, Hogarth's Election, his Harlot's and Rake's Progress, the Plague by Raphael†, and many others.

When these actions are grounded upon, or interwoven with, mere local usages, they are liable to become obscure and uninteresting, in proportion as those local usages are less generally known: for this reason it is that Raphael's Plague, the Extreme Unction, the Confirmation, and other invented subjects of Poussin, are more universally intelligible than those of Hogarth; even supposing that these latter were sufficiently well drawn to invite the attention of the spectator, which is far from being the case. However, the March to Finchley, and the Tavern Debauch, where one of the girls, like another Thais, is setting fire to the globe, and some other of his works, where the humour is not merely local, ought to be excepted, as the disorders committed by the military, the excesses of a tavern, and such like, are much the same every where.

Allowing for some peculiarities of Watteau's affectation and Ruben's vulgarity and unnecessary grossness, the gallant and festive usages which they have represented, are just as familiar to one nation as to another.‡

* Now in the Louvre. — W.

† Il Morbetto, a drawing in the gallery of the Uffizj at Florence; it is engraved by Marcantonio. — W.

‡ It would be almost a crime to omit taking notice in this place of two very striking pathetic compositions of this general kind, by M. Greuze. One is an aged, enraged father, denouncing curses on his son, who had been inveigled to go and serve in the army. The other represents the return of this undutiful son, maimed in his limbs, as the only fruit of his campaign, and struck with the shocking sight of his father, who had been worn down with anxiety and fatigue, now stretched out dead on a bier in the midst of his forlorn family.[1]

[1] Now in the Louvre. — W.

In the Attila, the Heliodorus, the Incendio del Borgo, and indeed, all other works of Raphael, founded upon particular historical facts, it was his constant maxim to endeavour at obtaining that arrangement which was best calculated to give the most entire, and the most energetic expression of his subject. In the Saint Peter delivered from prison, he has even given three different points of time in the same view: the awaking of Saint Peter, the leading him forth through the sleeping guards, and the confusion of the awakened guards after he was gone. This fault, like the anachronisms before mentioned, is hardly imputable, as it was not committed through ignorance, but by election, and although the representing the three different effects of the light of the angel*, of the torch, and of the moon, may be allowed to have had some weight with him, yet without doubt his principal inducement was to give his subject that entireness and complete eludication which he was so solicitous to obtain in all his works.

This worthy object of his solicitude is what I would recommend to your attention, and not the particular conduct which he adopted on this occasion.

Upon the whole, it may be observed, that there is generally found in the compositions of Raphael a most beautiful and interesting chain of well reasoned and happily variegated incidents, a solid, manly judgment, and, above all, a divine, enthusiastic warmth, and expressive energy, which has set him above all moderns in this branch of the art.

The *allegoric* is another species of composition, and has been adopted in order to substantiate intellectual subjects, by giving them such a form and body as may make them known to our senses. But this method of allegorizing, whether it be simple and carried through the whole composition, or of the partial and mixed kind, where it is blended with historical fact, is in both cases so extremely liable to be misused, that it can never be safely meddled with, but by

* In this composition Raphael has introduced that effect which was afterwards adopted with so much *éclat* by Correggio, in his picture of the "Notte;" though those who have expatiated with such enthusiasm on its *invention* by Correggio, have wholly overlooked its previous employment by Raphael. All these frescoes are engraved by Volpato and his pupils. — W.

men of much discretion and judgment. Even some of the greatest artists have been deservedly censured for the obscurity of many of those emblematic and allegoric refinements which they have sometimes wholly, and often partially, employed in their compositions. Many parts of Raphael's picture of the Jurisprudence are at present unintelligible. His two large figures of Justice and Meekness in the Hall of Constantine are in the same state; with respect to idea, they present nothing but a blank to the mind. The same may be said of many things in the galleries of the Luxembourg * and Versailles; and what from the confusion occasioned by ill-directed flattery, and the jargon of far-fetched and over-refined allegory, the ceiling at Whitehall does actually present no subject to the mind of the spectator. Associations of mere local, temporary notions, are too mutable and evanescent to serve as a durable basis for the sustaining of symbols and allegorical personages. When the allusions of resemblance do not obviously consist in the things themselves, but in a kind of arbitrary compacts, which are (like mere words) confined to a limited number of persons, places, and times, there is great likelihood of their soon perishing. This truth is sufficiently evident in all the arts, as well in those which depend upon language, as in those which employ forms, although it has been of more fatal consequence in the latter; for however justly we might complain of the want of simplicity and true taste in Spenser, and other writers, who had given into this fashion of allegorizing, yet, from the nature of language, their ideas will be ever as intelligible as their language; by a word or two properly placed, it was always in their power to carry the reader with them in the highest flights of their absurdity, and though they might offend his taste and judgment, yet his understanding was not darkened. But this matter is quite different in painting and sculpture: if the spectator has not the same range of thought and sentiment which operated in the construction of the work, the labour is lost, and, at best, is but a blank.

* The celebrated series of pictures in commemoration of the marriage of Henri IV. with Marie de' Medici, and now in the Louvre. The original sketches, by Rubens, are in the Pinacothek at Munich. — W.

What must be said, then, of the absurd collections of Otto Venius*, Ripa†, and others, who have been at the pains of raking together all this offal of the imagination. However, such books may have their use, and serve as a kind of bathos, replete with all the low, beggarly allusion, false wit, and impertinent, trifling refinement which the artist must carefully avoid.

What remains to us of the ancient allegorical personifications is of a nature quite the reverse. It is simple, obvious, and, besides, it makes a part of every man's education, and is long likely so to continue, as the Greek and Roman literature is in no danger of losing its credit. All civilised nations, that is, almost all nations, are become its conservators, and happily there are now no more Goths and Vandals, from whom any further destruction is to be apprehended.

Of this legitimate kind of allegory many sound examples might be instanced. I shall just mention two, which are perhaps the more excellent, as their ingenious authors have somewhat more than their share in the general participation of the subject matter. One is, Time delivering Truth from the persecution of Rage and Envy, by Nicholas Poussin. The other is the Calumny by Apelles, which Lucian has so admirably described, and accompanied by such a suite of remarks on the nature of the subject, as, I believe, have never been outdone by any observer on life and manners.‡ From this description of Lucian, Raphael has restored the design: and others of no less beauty and pertinence might be fabricated on the remarks.

It is very much to be doubted whether these and such like general abstract compositions are not of all others the most full, complete, and eloquent, and carry with them the most comprehensive, ethical application. The representation of some one similar historical fact might perhaps interest the passions more (yet of this I am not certain), but it would

* Otto Van Veen, the master of Rubens, made a set of Allegorical Illustrations of Horace. *Zinnebeelden, getrokken uit Horatius Flaccus*, &c. Amsterdam, 1683. — W.

† Cav. Cesare Ripa; he wrote a book on Iconology, which was enlarged by the Cav. Gio. Z. Castellini. *Iconologia*, &c. Ven. 1645. — W

‡ See note, *ante*, p. 133. — W.

not fill the mind, and come home to all the occasions of general application like the allegoric composition.

Of the mixed composition of allegoric and historic fact, Rubens has in one respect given a very admirable specimen in his Judgment of Paris.* The allegoric expedient of the Fury, who is bursting through the clouds, leads the mind into all the terrible consequences of the decision; and nothing can better show what should and should not be done on these occasions, where allegory is blended with history, than the comparison of this sublime conception of Rubens with the over-refined allegories of the Scamander, Simois, the Nymphs, and other trifling addenda of cold details, which spoil that otherwise most excellent design, which Raphael has left us on the same subject.†

There are, then, some few occasions where the allegoric composition may (when in the hands of a wise, ingenious, and feeling artist) be adopted in preference to any other. But the student cannot be too often reminded, that when these occasions occur (which can be but seldom) he must in nowise indulge himself in any silly, unwarranted conceits of his own fancy. His invention must consist in the disposition of old, and not in the creation of new things. The figures and symbols he employs must address the spectators in the language received, and well understood, and not in any short-lived emblematic jargon. In the instances I have mentioned from Poussin and Apelles, the subject or action is substantially and fully explained by the figures themselves: as it would have been in any particular historical or invented fact. The insignia of the figures can add nothing to the explication and interest of the action; though they raise the personages, from mere historic individuals, into the abstract, and more sublime characters of Time, Eternity, Rage, and Envy.

One cannot without some astonishment reflect on the ridiculous allegoric absurdities which have been so frequently committed in sepulchral monuments; the place of all others where we might expect to find something solemn, direct, pathetic; of a plain, manly sense; useful, exemplary, and

* Now in the National Gallery. — W.

† Drawing: engraved by Marcantonio and others. There is a small picture of the same subject in the Corsini Palace, attributed to Giulio Romano. — W.

utterly devoid of all the fripperies and impertinence of mere wit. There are no occasions where the operations of a great mind could have been more effectually manifested; and it is much to be regretted that so many noble opportunities, and such immense sums of money, should be so shamefully and idly thrown away upon mere manual labour, as if there had been no such thing as mind in the country. I shall mention one expedient, which, if it could be adopted, might help to do away a great deal of this impertinent trifling. When the life of the deceased may have been of that unmeddling, retired nature, as not to furnish any adequate materials for the subject of such a monument as his friends might wish to have erected; instead of torturing allegory to no purpose, or more probably to a bad purpose, recourse may be had to the numberless subjects our religion might afford. Even many exemplary subjects of moral action might be invented, agreeably to the wishes of the testator or his friends. This would open a noble field for sculpture, in the round, in basso-rilievo, or both, and of the most interesting kind; the dead might be made to address the living after a becoming manner, and a honourable reputation would naturally accrue to all the parties concerned, by thus converting into a matter of utility, and moral advantage, that which is but too often nothing better than an unintelligible mass, or a mere nuisance of flattery and falsehood.*

* Sepulchral monuments being a kind of affectionate conservation, and embalming of the dead, in order to retain as much as may be their character and memory still with us; from the sums expended in erecting them, the publicity of their situations, and durability of their existence — from all these considerations united, it would seem a matter of much importance, that they should be executed in the best, and most adequate manner, and not afford subject for ridicule and contempt, instead of admiration and praise; more especially when it be considered, that these monuments are more easily accessible, than anything else in the country, to the inspection of strangers, who may be utterly unacquainted with the influence, and jobbing, by which the doing of them is obtained; particularly in those monuments, done at the expense of the nation, and of particular societies.

With respect to those more important monuments, consecrated to the memory of heroes and great men, it is a very arduous undertaking to attempt any thing further than the inscription, and a characteristic representation of the person; depending on the notoriety and celebrity of his character for the rest: however desirable it may be to do more, yet it is

There is a kind of arrangement which is altogether mechanical, and does not deserve the name of composition; particularly when it is employed in associating objects which are susceptible of action and connected sentiment, and can never be supposed to exist together without them. This unmeaning arrangement is hardly admissible amongst the inanimate objects of nature: but the human character, such personages as St. Mark, St. Nicholas, St. Catharine, St. Sebastian, and so forth, ought never to be brought together without story, business, or connexion, merely to be exhibited like a parcel of chairs, tables, or other furniture: and yet some of the greatest artists have given their sanction to these and the like absurdities; unhappily necessitated, as they were, to lay aside their own judgment and to adopt the dreams and visions of their silly employers.* This was evidently the case in the Saint Jerome of Correggio, in the Saint Nicholas, and Saint Mark of Titian, and in many other works. However, some good has arisen out of this evil; as those great artists have apparently endeavoured in some measure to atone for this want of subject by a more than ordinary solicitude in giving what perfection they could to the other parts. Correggio has been enabled, by the double attention he has

dangerous; for to appreciate, portray, and properly transmit to posterity an adequate representation of the peculiar merits of great men, requires extraordinary mental qualifications in the artist; — an enterprise with that *bow*, which is only to be drawn by Ulyssian nerves. It should be permitted only to a hero to commemorate a hero: and it is only from the hand and masterly felicity of a Tacitus, Diodorus, or a Xenophon, that we can reasonably expect those beautiful monumental-like eulogiums upon a Thraseas Pætus, a Priscus, Epaminondas, or Socrates, which, like gems of a trancendent lustre, gracefully intervene to render the rubbish and ordinary tissue of human transactions supportable. Does the sculptor, who would wish to immortalise his work by appreciating and setting in an advantageous view the characteristic peculiar excellence of an Alfred, a Sir Thomas More, or Sir F. Bacon, does he, or ought he to expect to succeed without similar requisites? Is it not from an adequate comprehension and elevation of mind that we are entitled to hope for success either in writing or in art? What can the employers of inadequate artists think; or, rather, do they think at all?

* The employers of these painters were not silly; such pictures were not produced as mere works of art, but as high religious exponents, as incentives to piety and evidences of devotion. The *sillyness*, if it exist, is in the promoters and supporters of a faith which inculcates a reliance on human mediation, and intercession of saints.—W.

bestowed on the Infant Jesus, to give some sentimental connexion to the parts of his arrangement, but in the others every principle of association and connexion is wanting, except such as is necessary for the mere mechanical distribution of the parts as a whole, so as not to offend the sight.

After the preceding reasoning and examples, by which I wished to impress upon your mind the necessity of regarding the expression of the subject, as the primary object of the composition, it remains now that we take some notice of those more mechanical attentions to the mere distribution of the several objects, by which they are rendered agreeable in their several situations, and are altogether made to concur in forming one entire and complete totality, of easy comprehension to the sight.

Different integrals or totalities may be equally entire and complete, although their configuration and their several distributions and arrangements be very different from each other, and although some of them might incline to the more uniform, and others to the more variegated appearance, according to what the sentiment of the subject may require; since the more uniform may be rendered productive of grandeur, and the more variegated of beauty. In these particular cases, the quantity or degree of this uniformity or variety must be regulated by the sentiment proper to the subject. But on all occasions whatever, some modification and judicious co-operation of these two opposite principles of uniformity and variety is absolutely necessary, in order to render every whole and its component parts an object agreeable, or, at least, not disagreeable to the sight. But these, as well as all other things, have their destined limits; and the student must be well aware that a too great uniformity, or a dull repetition of the same things, without any diversity in their forms, aspects, and other circumstances, must be insipid, tiresome, and disgusting: and, on the other hand, a too great variety and affectation of continued and strongly-marked diversity and contrast must perplex, distract the sight, and destroy all unity of idea and comprehension. These extremes, therefore, are equally reprehensible, and have been for similar reasons judiciously avoided by all good composers, in every other art, as well as in those of design.

That the whole of the composition may with ease and

pleasure to the spectator be comprehended in one view, it is necessary that its several parts (however variegated in their details) be so artfully linked together as to form one general appearance, consisting of a few large parts, masses, or groups of objects. But whether the several parts of this concatenated mass be on the same, or on different plans, it is equally necessary, that although they be so united as to form an easy concurrence into one general view, yet they are not to be crowded or huddled together: their separation and distinctness from each other are objects of no less consequence than their union. The several portions or masses of this general appearance should be diversified either in their magnitude or figure, or some in both. Of these masses one ought to be principal, and all the others dependent and subordinate; and as the attention will therefore necessarily centre on this principal mass, it follows of course, that whatever is intended to be of the greatest interest in the composition will appear more properly, and to the greatest advantage, as forming the whole or a part of this principal mass. As to the general shape or form of the principal and its subordinate groups, taken together, whether it incline to the pyramidal, either erect, inverted, laterally, or horizontally placed, or to any other figure, this is a matter entirely arbitrary; the only attention employed on this occasion is to guard against the too great regularity, sameness, and equality of parallel, rectilinear, rectangular, or even too circular appearances. In a word, whatever be the general figure of these concatenated groups, it should neither be too regular, nor too complicated, and it is rather to be loosely or obscurely indicated or hinted, than clearly and specifically defined. The several parts of this concatenated mass should preserve some kind of equilibrium and symmetrical order amongst themselves, that nothing may appear wanting to its completion as a whole; and in the same manner that the several masses or groups are attached to each other, that nothing may appear entirely insulated or detached in all its parts, the several figures and other component parts of a group must in some part of its contour or drapery be, as it were, let into or interwoven with the next object.

Useless repetition is disgusting; I say useless repetition, because it sometimes happens that it is necessary to repeat

the same action or gesture, and even to extend it through many figures, from whose general co-operation its energy is to be derived; but even in this case it is desirable to make some light variations in the circumstances, appendages, or such parts as are not essential to this concurrence. For in general the eye as well as the mind is in a continual progress, always desirous of something that hath not been yet shown.

By this variety and continued diversity in the actions, gestures, and aspects of the several figures, it is not to be understood that their contrasts should be very violent; it is not necessary that if one arm is advanced forwards the other should be carried backwards, or that the back view of one figure should be contrasted with the front view of another. This extreme and direct opposition is too fierce and violent to produce a pleasing effect; it would be even too regular, would want novelty, and must defeat the very purpose which it was intended to answer, since your stock of variety would by this means be too scanty and soon exhausted. These violent contrasts are sometimes useful, where you want to produce interruption; but in general the end of variety is better answered by slight transitions in the several possible aspects and degrees of action, and these are numberless: as in any one given action of a figure many intermediate views might be taken even between the front and lateral ones, which will be sufficiently different for the purpose of variety; how much more, then, when you may indulge the liberty of such small variations in the action itself, as may fairly arise from temper, habit, or other circumstances. The School of Athens is very admirable in this respect: there is nothing of affected antithesis, or studied contrast in the whole composition. Unconscious and unsolicitous of the spectator's attention, the several groups and figures seem to have no retrospect to any thing but their proper employment. The beautiful variations which diversify every part of this extensive composition are carried on by such easy transitions as are at once most grateful to the view, most capable of endless extension, and the least ostentatious and liable to detection. Thus, by the highest and most laborious efforts of study, Raphael has been enabled to conceal every appearance of artful management.

One has a pleasure in pursuing those mechanical attentions of composition in Raphael; and much more in the fine antiques, where they are even carried still farther, with a higher and more studied accuracy; as it was natural to expect, from the extreme solicitude of the Grecian artists to preserve beautiful, and agreeably variegated forms, in every aspect of their works. When the highest possible association of those mechanical attentions is thus worthily employed in decorating and giving the last perfection to beautiful, or majestic form, and to interesting and sublime action, the mind is satisfied; every thing is then in its becoming and proper place; small and trifling particulars are no longer such when thus dignified by these exalted associations. We can then pursue with pleasure, even with enthusiasm, the skilful manner in which the sculptor of Laocoon has obviated the disagreeable parallel appearances, and the void occasioned by the necessary action of the left arm: how usefully and agreeably is the hiatus or chasm between the legs of the father filled up by the drapery, and by the noble contortions of the serpents which bind the whole together, break it into agreeable angles, and give the necessary massive appearance which should predominate in this place. Also the almost rectangular appearance, occasioned by the raising of the right knee, is done away by the inclination and action of the younger son, which fills the void.

It would be ungenerously anticipating your satisfaction to pursue the many similar detailed observations which this glorious group affords. Go to it yourselves — it will abundantly repay your attentions, as well in study of the mechanical, as of the ideal perfections.

Some people, particularly artists, have affected to doubt whether the ancient Greeks were acquainted with those regulations of uniformity and variety which constitute what is called picturesque composition. This group of the Laocoon ought to have shown them how little reason there was for such doubts: nay, even the Apollo, the Hercules Farnese, and many other single figures, are evidently constructed upon the same harmonious principles of picturesque composition that is pursued in a group of many figures. The totality is the same, of whatever number of parts it be composed.

If modern art is sometimes unjustly and ignorantly underrated by some mere antiquaries and others, who affect to confine their whole admiration and attention to the labours of past ages, this invidious business may be regretted, but cannot be helped. Horace is a witness, that it is a nuisance which has existed even in the very best ages, when there was less reason to expect it; and that it arises more out of jealousy to the abilities and fame of our cotemporaries, than from any sincere conviction of the superiority of past times: however, but a few can have ability sufficient to be chargeable with this ungenerous conduct — the herd is more excusable, and rather to be pitied than blamed; for in general their knowledge is of books, and not of arts; and they are so little acquainted with any real principles of judgment, which only can enable them to determine in all new occurrences, that rather than give up the unhappy vanity of being thought connoisseurs and sound judges. they are necessarily obliged (in order to conceal the real state of the fact) to adopt only the eulogiums which are upon record, and to affect an utter disregard for every thing else. But the reverse of wrong is not always right; let us not, as artists, take our measures of conduct out of pure opposition to such people, by running into the opposite extreme. That which dishonours them can do us no credit; and besides, it will ill become us to forget our obligations to our illustrious predecessors in the art, and to attempt stripping them of any part of that praise which they may fairly and justly claim. Let us in justice to the art make but little account of the composition of the Niobe, of the Toro Farnese*, of the greatest part of the pictures at Herculaneum; and, if you will, of a great number of the basso-rilievos. But let us not say that the ancients were unacquainted with the principles of harmonious composition, whilst there are so many admirable monuments which evidence the contrary.†

* In the Museo Berbonico at Naples. This is the most complicated group remaining in ancient sculpture. Amphion and Zethus tie Dirce to the horns of a wild bull to revenge the injuries of their mother, Antiope. — W.

† These principles of harmonious composition are, after all, but of secondary consideration, and in the order of things, must, whenever the nature and circumstances of the subject require it, give place to that truth and energetic expression of the business in hand which is the prime

As art is of a two-fold nature, consisting of the *ideal* and the *mechanical*, it has so happened, that when arts have been

object. Of this truth a better instance could not be given than in that admirable statue of the Discobolus, in the collection of Mr. Townley. The figure is stooping forwards with a considerable curvature of the back, the left arm hanging across the body so as to have the hand in contact with the right knee: the right arm holding the Discus, being flung back as far as may be, and in an insulated line almost perpendicular to the curve of the body, and the left leg and foot dragging behind with the toes bent backwards, griping the earth, so as to produce the greater impetus in the general discharge of the succeeding action; where the discus is to be sent forward with the greatest possible force.

Although these contrivances of the animal body appear almost to be instinctive, yet, as we have had occasion to observe in the last discourse, they are progressional in the acquirement, not only in the human frame, but in that of all other animal bodies; however differently the mechanism of each may be contrived for the peculiar adaptation to their several stations.

The coiling up of a serpent, the squatting, gathering up, and contraction of the parts of a cat, a horse, or a man, operate in the same manner as a wound-up spring or a bent bow; with, however, an observable advantage in the human body, resulting from its erect posture, and the accumulated force obtained from gravitation in occasionally carrying the weight of its upper limbs so much out of the centre of its equilibrium on both sides during the discharge.

There is a repetition of this figure of the Discobolus (with only the difference of the turn of the head) in the possession of the Marchese Massimi, which the Abbate Fea, in his Roman edition of Winckelmann, proves by a passage from Lucian to have been copied from the famous Discobolus in bronze of Myron. On my first seeing this figure at Mr Townley's, at *Torso* in the capitol at Rome, of which I had made some drawings, occurred to my recollection immediately. It is restored as a fallen gladiator, by the famous M. Le Gros, and was evidently in its ancient state the same figure as this of Mr. Townley and that at the Massimi. The Marquis of Lansdowne has also another Torso of the same figure restored as a Diomed; and there is another restored as one of the sons of Niobe. For the reasons adduced by the Abbate Fea, all these five marble repetitions of this Discobolus, which had been dug up in different places, are evidently copies of the same original, and are glorious testimonies of the great estimation in which the bronze of Myron was held by the ancients. The position of the head hanging down in the same direction as the body, is very remarkable in Mr. Townley's figure, as it is a deviation from the original of Myron, as described by Lucian, and consequently from the Massimi copy, which corresponds perfectly with that description. In all other respects these figures agree, and this deviation appears to have been not unwisely made, as in this way all ambiguity in the intention of the figure by the direction of the eyes (which are not wanting in the action) is ingeniously avoided; and in

nearly perfected by the consecutive labours of great men, the necessary operations of the mere mechanical conduct will by that time be reduced to such sure principles of practice, as that they may be exercised apart, when they fall (as in the unavoidable course of things must soon happen) into the hands of men of mean intellects, who, incapable of meddling with the *ideal*, will operate solely with these mechanical principles, as their entire stock of trade, and thus bring about a separation between the body and the soul of art, with very little prospect of their being happily re-united afterwards. Every art will furnish but too many instances of these com-

finishing the action, at least an equal acceleration of impetus is produced, by the head shooting upwards and forward, along with the other extremities.

This, to the best of my recollection, is the only work of any of the *celebrated* ancient sculptors of which even any copy remains; for the sculptors of the Laocoon, though much and justly extolled for this performance, are not enumerated with the artists of the first class; though they must certainly stand in that rank with us.

But, to come back to our Discobolus, in Mr. Townley's collection. Besides its admirable expression of the subject, many views of its lower limbs and their sublime proportions call to one's recollection the noble style of design of Annibal Carracci in the Farnese Gallery, and are the best vouchers for its sublimity, value, and preference, to any other style of design adopted by the painters of the old schools.

By way of parenthesis, it will not be foreign to our purpose to mention here a particular respecting this Discobolus of Myron, which also furnishes an admirable illustration of what I thought myself so much obliged to insist upon in the second discourse, with regard to the inefficacy and uncertainty of even the best chosen mere words, when compared with the things themselves. Lucian, whose credit as a fine writer stands in the highest estimation, who was for some part of his time bred a statuary, and who seems to be the only ancient writer, now preserved, who had such a thorough and familiar knowledge of the arts of painting and sculpture as to write accurately on the productions of either, has, in one of his dialogues, so described this Discobolus of Myron, that when the Massimi Discobolus was discovered in 1782, the Abbate Fea found from this passage that it was a copy of Myron's bronze figure, and followed up his discovery with this remarkable observation: "It is, however, to be confessed, that it is only by the inspection of this figure, we rightly comprehend Lucian's meaning, which, for want of it, has hitherto been mistaken by the interpreters and commentators; and that a just version of it can now be given." Here the abbot instances interpretations of some of the words of this passage by the learned Gesner, by Solanus, and Reitzius, which are laughably absurd and ridiculous. [See the notice of MYRON in the supplement to the *Penny Cyclopædia*. — W.]

positions of mere manual dexterity. How frequently has it been found that a musical composer, without either understanding or sensibility as a man, may, notwithstanding, as an artist, be so furnished with mechanical information in his concords and discords, his harmonical arrangements of firsts, thirds, fifths, and a long et cetera of proportionate relations, as to entertain the ear for hours together, without any the least regard to that imitation of passion and manners which have been thought so essential in this as well as in other arts. So it has often happened in the painter's composition; it might have required great abilities to have first discovered that picturesque harmony depended upon certain proportionate conjunctions of uniformity and variety; but this knowledge once communicated and exemplified in some illustrious instances, the further continuance and prosecution of it became a matter of mechanical operation, arising out of mere habit and dextrous application.

Whether these conjunctions of uniformity and variety be considered as relating to the lines and angles formed by the contours and surfaces of the component parts; or to the arrangement of the different degrees in the chiaroscuro of those parts; or in the degrees and quantities of the more uniform or more variegated hues and tints of colour (for the mere harmony of a composition extends to all these particulars, and may be equally put in practice without any great attention paid to the essential qualities of the things so composed) — whether they be hogs or heroes — whether flowers, fruit, dead game, kettles, pans, and the other utensils of a kitchen — the objects surrounding a death bed, or those composing a triumph — whether the objects be well or ill chosen, drawn or characterised — to the mechanical composer it is all a matter of perfect indifference, his only solicitude is about the harmonious manner of arranging them.

An agreeable arrangement of the ingenious Mr. Cozens's fortuitous blots, will answer just as well as one that is chained down to the specific properties of natural objects.

Many agreeable examples of this mere harmonious arrangement may be found in the compositions of Ciro Ferri, Cortona, Lanfranco, and of Correggio, upon whom the others were formed.

But notwithstanding that these harmonical attentions seem

to have been the prevailing principle of Correggio's admirable composition in the Duomo at Parma, yet this, as well as all his other works, is so impregnated with a certain elevated style of design and graceful sentiment, that we are hardly conscious (at least for some time) of the absence of some of those higher requisites which distinguish the compositions of Raphael, and the antique.

As to Lanfranco, Cortona, Ferri, and the others of this leaven, their composition is in general more agreeable, and rises in its value in proportion to the insipidity of the subject; as must ever be the case with those who are destitute of the higher excellence, and yet these three men are certainly in the number of the ablest mechanical artists. But when the mind looks for great exertions, it will reject with disgust any attempt to satisfy it with matters of inferior importance.

Let so much suffice at present for composition, whether it regards the several circumstances of an action, or the detailed portions and members of any other integral or totality.

I shall (God willing) in my next Lecture, lay before you such observations on Chiaroscuro, as appear to be of the most essential importance. The chiaroscuro is properly a part of composition, and its expressive or agreeable arrangement must follow as a consequence, from the previous disposition of those lines, angles, and surfaces, which have been already mentioned.

Lecture V. — On Chiaroscuro.

Gentlemen,

In the subject of our consideration this night, it may be for the purpose previously to take notice, that there has not been as yet, any proper and accurate term adopted in the English language for that part of the art which is understood by the Italian word *chiaroscuro*, and the French, *clair-obscur*. By these foreign words is meant that general result which is effected by the several co-operating gradations of the light and dark objects of a picture, as well where those lights and darks arise from what is called the proper and in-

herent colour of the objects, as where they arise only from the several degrees of illumination and shadow.

We have generally called this part of the art the light and shade, words which, when thus contrasted to each other, give a very inadequate and stinted idea, which does not reach above half the desired extent, as it does not comprehend all those chiaros and scuros, lights and darks, which, whether they be in the shade or not, do so essentially concur in a well arranged expressive chiaroscuro. Neither does the clear-obscure (which an ingenious writer has adopted) come fully to the desired point, for the word clear is at least equivocal, our idea of clear colours and light colours being not the same. The general light and shade is also a phrase incorrect and inadequate, for there may be a beautiful and very forcible chiaroscuro in a picture, by the mere opposition of light and dark colours, though almost all the objects should be in the light, and consequently little or no shade in the picture. This is often found in many of Vandyck's, and other portraits, where the heavy colours of the drapery, and other adjacent similar matters, contrast with the light colours, and produce the desired effect without any heavy or extensive shadows.

Chiaroscuro, clairobscur, literally rendered, is *light-dark;* a word which, besides being uncouth to an English ear, would be also ambiguous, as it might be mistaken for the discrimination of a species of dark of the lighter kind, from one still darker. Usage has, notwithstanding, reconciled the French and Italians to the appropriation of this term, though in the beginning it must have been equally uncouth and equivocal to them, as it would be to us without the particle (and), light and dark, *chiaro e oscuro*, which reduces it to the separate materials of which the word was originally formed. But as I am not of weight sufficient to give currency to this new term of light-dark, and as the words light and dark are in general use, and fully comprehend whatever can be understood by the appropriate term, chiaroscuro, I shall, in speaking of this part of our art, use the words light and dark, or chiaroscuro, in preference to light and shade, which, for the reasons already given, are found to be inadequate, defective, and tending to mislead.*

* *Chiaroscuro* itself is now an established term in English art-literature. — W.

The indispensable necessity of selection, or judicious choice in all the component parts of a picture, has been urged at some length in a former discourse, and in no part of the art is this truth more evident than in that which is now the subject of our attention: for it does greatly depend upon the happy or unskilful distribution of the lights and darks, whether objects shall present themselves with that disgusting confusion and embarrassment which distract our sight, or with that unity and harmony which we can never behold without pleasure. There are times when the scenes about Hyde Park, Richmond, Windsor, and Blackheath, appear very little interesting. The difference between a meridian and evening light, the reposes of extensive shadow, the half lights and catching splendours that those scenes sometimes exhibit, compared with their ordinary appearance, do abundantly show how much is gained by seizing upon those transitory moments of fascination, when nature appears with such accumulated advantage. If this selection be so necessary respecting objects intrinsically beautiful, how much more studiously ought it to be endeavoured at, when we are obliged to take up with matters of less consequence. How many of the deservedly esteemed productions of the Flemish and Dutch schools would be thrown aside, as intolerable and disgusting, were it not for the beautiful effects of their judicious distribution of the lights and darks. Art is selection; it is perfect when this selection is pursued throughout the whole, and it is even so valuable when extended but to a part only, as to become a passport for the rest.

Whether communicated light be any thing emitted from a luminous body, or whether it arises from any adaptation in the solid particles, or least interstitial parts of the surfaces of objects, to exhibit the image of the luminary in proportion to the degree of their compactness, or smoothness (as is evidently the case in the pupil of the eye and other smooth surfaces), — whatever the energy of light may be, or however it be communicated, is perhaps a knowledge not to be obtained, in which happily we are not concerned. Our business is not with its nature, but with its visible effects. As to shade, though it is the inseparable concomitant of light on all opaque bodies, yet certainly it is nothing in itself but a mere negation, a privation, and absence of light occasioned by the

interposition of the opaque parts of bodies: however (to *us* at least), it is not a mere nonentity; for as light is a principle the most active and procreative, is immediately communicated to all the objects directly before it, and by them so reflected or exhibited as to be visible (though with diminished lustre) in all that plenitude of objects that surround us, according to the direction of their several surfaces, so its total absence is merely a privation; and nothing, however shadowed, is so absolutely blotted out, at least to us, as to prevent the returns of vision from co-operating with the information of our other senses with respect to the whole or parts of their proper objects. On the other hand, this opposition of shade to light occasioned by the opacity of objects, and the interruption of their surfaces, is not only one great cause that objects are seen, but it also, by its various degrees of strength and weakness, affords the means to judge of the distance at which we see them: and this holds in the degrees of light and dark with respect to the hues of colour, as well as in those where the mere strength or weakness of light and shadow is only considered.

As all objects become indistinct, and are lost to the sight, in proportion as they are left in obscurity, so all the parts of objects exposed to the light are more distinctly seen and appear more made out and determined than the parts in shadow. In the same manner all hues of colour are proportionably confounded and perish in obscurity, and they receive their lustre and their characteristic discriminations from each other but in proportion as they approach the light: similar effects follow as objects are more or less distant, receding from the sight and approaching the horizon; they not only lose off their magnitude, but the discrimination of their component parts is rendered more difficult; they necessarily become proportionably blurred, confused, and indistinguishable, as well in their forms as hues of colour, and the more so as the interposing medium of air happens to be dense and hazy. This difference in the degrees of distinctness is very observable in the evening and morning appearance of the same objects. The exhalations and mists upon which the sun's catching rays diffuse such a glory in the evening, give an additional indistinctness, as they are spread like a veil, be-

tween the eye and the remote objects. Whereas, in the morning, after the sleeping vapours have been dispersed or carried up, the parts, the hues, the determinate forms of remote objects become much more distinguishable, and, if I might so express myself, the beauty, freshness, and sharpness of the impression is less effaced by the distance.

Without entering too minutely into the consideration of the lights and shadows of particular objects, which in great part falls within the province of perspective, yet it may be observed in general, that not only the light and shadows of the several objects considered separately, but the character of their general effect, depends greatly upon the quality of the light, and the adventitious circumstances which accompany its communication. In a general light, when the sun is so concealed by clouds as to give no particular eclat to that part of the hemisphere, objects are illuminated vertically, and but feebly; consequently their shadows are weak, contracted, and without any lateral projection: their greater or lesser degree of force depends upon the comparative strength or weakness of their peculiar hues of colour, and their local situation, respecting the quantity of medium, or air, in which they are immersed, by their greater or lesser degree of remoteness.

When this general light is brought through any aperture, as a gateway, window, or the like, it then becomes a particular light, and affords all the advantages of lateral, projected shadows, and reflexes. The same happens in the open air, when the sun, though hidden, communicates a great degree of lustre (as it generally does) to the sky and clouds in that quarter: objects are often illuminated from that particular light, and the subordinate general light, communicated to the opposite side of the objects from the other less illuminated parts of the air, serves but as a shadow for the particular, predominating light: it follows, then, that the shadows exposed to the open air, though (to use the phrase) projected from a stronger light, are less forcible, less sharp and decided, than the shadows of the weaker light, when in a confined situation which excludes the interference of the surrounding air.

The principal or strongest light on convex bodies will be of greater or lesser extent according to the extent of the

convexity, and to the magnitude of the luminary. The light from a torch will be more contracted than that from a window, and the progression of this light on those surfaces is by an insensible gradation from the advanced part where it first catches and shines to the inclining half light, to the half shadow, and to the retired parts or shade, where it is lost. In angular bodies the interruption from the light to the shadow will be sudden and precipitate, as the angles which occasion it. The reflexes, which soften, and sometimes enliven the extremity of the shades, are no part of this direct light, but are either communications from the surrounding air, or from the neighbouring bodies, which are directly illuminated, and they are stronger or weaker according to the proximity of those bodies, and the degree of light they possess.

As it is by this opposition or contrast between the different degrees of light, or the different hues of colour, that all natural objects become visible, and as it is by the opposition of shade to light (occasioned by the interruption of surface within the boundary of objects) that our sight is enabled to distinguish solid bodies from mere plain superficies; as this is the invariable constitution of things, it is difficult to account how the ancient Egyptians, the Chinese, and the other oriental nations, could have been for so many ages looking at nature, without having the ability to distinguish the component parts of the great spectacle before them, and that they should overlook those gradations of light, or rilievo of light and shade, by which objects are perceived, and their nature and distance ascertained. In a former discourse, it has been intimated that the pictures of those people were no more than a mere writing, where the slightest intimation of form was (as it is with us) sufficient for the purpose intended. This account of the matter affords the most favourable salvo for their reputation; for otherwise, if we should suppose that, with the true spirit of artists, the imitation of nature had been in the least attended to, we must then have expected, that in such an immense tract of time, nations so cried up for their great sagacity and superior penetration, would have been able to arrive at the ordinary knowledge of the mere light and shade of objects, as it is found in the

works of Albert Durer, Holbein, and the old Italian painters before Da Vinci. Some time since, in a conversation on this subject with one of those indiscriminate admirers of antiquity (who had more knowledge of books than of nature and art) in the hurry of his zeal, he was almost inclined to persist, that in those oriental nations, the natural objects had no shadow at all, or that if there was any, it could not be discernible on the brown complexions of the inhabitants. But not to pursue such absurdities further than they are worth, let us return our attention to the admirable principles and conduct adopted by Giorgione, Titian, Correggio, Rubens, and the other great successors of Da Vinci, of whom it may be said, without a figure, that they were not only skilled in all the happy artifices of the light and shade, which give rilievo to objects, but that they went much further, and, assisted by a ray of intellectual sentiment, they defeated nature in her own way, with the materials they borrowed from herself.

With respect to the conduct necessary to be pursued in obtaining this advantageous distribution of the lights and darks in a picture, there is little now can be said upon it, as our neighbours on the continent have long since developed the principles of practice adopted by the great chiaroscurists. It has been, with good discernment, observed, that the constant maxim of those great artists was to dispose all their light and dark objects after such a manner as would best contribute to their being seen with the greatest possible advantage and ease. That to this end they arranged them in groups, and masses of light, half-light, darks, and half-darks, and reflexes. Of these lights and darks one was principal, the rest subordinate, and all generally co-operated to produce a totality and entireness in the work. The principal light was generally so disposed, as to give the greatest lustre to that part where the action and personages were of the greatest consequence, and where, accordingly, it was most proper to arrest the attention of the spectator. How far this light should extend, depended upon the previous arrangement of the objects, and the discreet and sentimental accommodation of it to the nature of the subject; but it is observable, that by extending it too far, its comparative value is proportionably lessened.

Although this principal light should, as it were, occupy

only its own sphere, and not be repeated, yet it is not to be without its satellites or dependents. Revifications and echoes of it, subordinate in magnitude or force, or both, should notwithstanding, by an artful concatenation, be distributed to the circumstances of secondary importance in the other parts. These echoes prevent the too great silence which would otherwise prevail in the middle tint and shade, and still further, they remove that appearance of magic-lanthorn-like and too artificial contrivance which sometimes offends in the works of Rembrandt, Caravaggio, and others. If the frame, boundary, or termination of a picture be (as it ought to be) considered only as a window-frame, or the limits of any other aperture through which we behold a certain portion of the creation, where any given action, business, or event may be supposed to happen, it must then appear evident that nothing can be more ill-judged than the practice of sacrificing all the extremities of a picture to a concentrated light upon the middle group, except where the subject makes it proper, as in Correggio's Nativity, and other night scenes. By this absurd conduct, the picture, as it were, becomes less than the canvas, its connexion with the rest of the creation is destroyed, and all opportunity taken away of that *artificial infinite* where ingenuity may have so many resources of suggested beauty or sublimity; where the imagination, when satisfied with the scene before it, might, by the concatenated secondary lights, be led on to the conception of something still further out of the picture: it is enough that these secondary lights be really subordinate, and then, instead of taking away from the principal light, they add greatly to its value. As these first and secondary lights must regulate the general effect, and give law, as it were, to the masses of middle and obscure tints, too much care cannot be taken to preserve them large, flowing, undisturbed by any trifling interruptions, and of variegated, beautiful shapes.

The middle tint, or intermediate passage between the two masses of light and dark, is of the utmost importance in producing a good general effect. It is principally owing to the judicious and happy management of the middle tint that those fierce opposite extremes of light and dark are brought to co-operate and harmonise: being subordinate in beauty to

the one, and in vigour and purity to the other, it makes their communication easy and agreeable, and serves as a foil to both, by giving each its comparative value. Parts of this mass of middle tint may be made to serve as an extension of the light in some places, and of the shade in others, just as you choose to oppose it to the parts of other masses, still lighter or darker; so that by its beautiful and variegated modes of penetrating into the light on the one hand, and the dark on the other, it becomes the great ligature and common bond of union to both; for provided that the nature and character of the middle tint be unequivocally defined and distinguished from things really light and dark in themselves, it is (from the oblique position of objects, intervention of clouds, and so forth) equally susceptible of all advantageous, fleeting, accidental beauties, with the secondary lights. It is not necessary that the middle tint should always intervene between every light and dark; on the contrary, the eclat, spirit, and propriety of certain parts absolutely require their being detached boldly from the light by the sole and immediate opposition of vigorous shadows, or other dark tints.

Extensive darks contribute greatly to the beautiful as well as to the grand and majestical result of the whole together: they equally serve to give a richness and grace to the broken hues of the middle *tint*, and eclat, beauty, and vigorous animation to the masses of light, whilst they also afford a repose no less grateful and necessary to prevent the fatigue and overexertion of the sight on the illuminated parts. To this end all the obscure or dark parts, whether shade or otherwise, should (as much as is possible, without breaking in upon higher considerations) be arranged after such a manner as to form but one general mass, and its greatest force be collected into some one part, where it might dominate with most advantage, or with least disadvantage, and become a principal on which all the others are in a graduated and harmonious dependence. With respect to this mass of dark, it need hardly be observed, that even where most vigorous, it is not a mere blot which obliterates wherever it is extended. The occasions are very few indeed where either the form or the proper colour of objects can be thus totally lost; objects, even dark in themselves, and in the most advanced and, consequently, the strongest shade, are, notwithstanding, only

deprived of the direct light; they are, therefore, more or less illuminated by the surrounding air, and by the reverberations of light from the other bodies in their vicinity. The concatenated portions of this mass of dark are, like those of the light, equally susceptible of all the elegant variations of size and figure. The interposition of drapery, its accidental cast of folds, and many other things in their nature purely optional, may be ingeniously recurred to on those occasions, when they do not interfere with propriety, or other important considerations. By these happy artifices the darks may be occasionally contracted, extended, and made to assume any desired form, and reflexes obtained wherever they may be attended with utility.

With respect to the proportionate magnitude of these masses — of light, middle tint, and dark, as relative to each other, it cannot precisely be determined. The nature of the subject, whether gay, majestic, or melancholy, affords the best rule to proceed by in each particular case. But an ingenious French writer has many years since observed, that, for the most part, the practice of those great painters who best understood the fine effects of chiaroscuro was to make the mass of middle tint larger than that of the light, and the mass of dark still larger than the masses of light and middle tints united together.

Although these recipes for the mechanical distribution of the lights and darks have been very sagaciously deduced from the practice of the excellent chiaroscurists, and cannot fail of being attended with benefit, yet the student should always recollect that a beauty impertinently placed, and obtained at the expense of a perfection of a superior order, will justly be considered as a great deformity, and that, consequently, the measure of these subordinate considerations must be dictated by matters of higher importance. The expressions of the subject must not appear to be created for the chiaroscuro, but the direct contrary. The chiaroscuro and the other attentions of the composition should be calculated to give the expression and sentiment of the subject all possible force and value. Every thing admissible in the chiaroscuro should fairly follow from that natural order in which the groups and other objects have been necessarily arranged for the better expression of the subject. This firmly fixed as the

invariable law, it may then be observed that in the infinitely various configurations of the sky and clouds, which may with equal possibility be connected with the subject, much assistance may be derived by obtaining such accidental lights or shades as, not interfering with propriety, their admission, extent, or local situation may be considered as a matter purely optional; and, still further, although in the very arrangement of the figures and groups, the expression of the subject, with its becoming dignity, fitness, and propriety, be the prime object; yet, as was observed in our last discourse, without detracting from this, some attention must be also paid in the collocation of these figures and groups, that they may either by their direct or perspective situation produce an agreeable variegated unity in their lights and forms: so it is but extending the same consideration to its natural length, to the composition of lights and darks, and contriving it that such certain portions of the surfaces of these forms may have such aspects with regard to the luminary as will best admit their being a proper substratum for those large, spreading masses of light, half-light, and dark upon which the beautiful, vigorous, and expressive effect of the work does so much depend. Indeed, the principal and the subordinate considerations of a picture ought and might very well be carried on altogether; and it is only from inability or laziness that they can interfere to the prejudice of each other.

The chiaroscuro may be also greatly assisted by the judicious management of the drapery; for although the modes of dress employed in the composition must be in strict conformity with the usages and characters of the people represented, and, although the disposition and casts of folds in the several draperies must be governed by the action, attitude, or way in which the figures are employed, and must further be so disposed as not to take from the spirit and energy of the action and value of the form by a too great concealment of the junctures and other parts of importance; yet, in the infinitely various casts and modes of distinction of the folds of these draperies, which may be equally compatible with the same action, an ingenious artist has it always in his power to extend or contract his lights or darks, according to the occasions of his general effect, without the least infraction of

propriety. Every beauty of which all the kinds of drapery are susceptible, may be rendered highly available in completing and removing any disagreeable appearances which might otherwise follow from the more absolute parts of the composition and chiaroscuro. The several textures of coarse and fine linen, of cotton, silk, woollen cloth, afford an extensive variety in the cast and manner of their several foldings, some more smart and frequently interrupted, others more flowing, majestic, and composed of larger parts. Spirit and force may be obtained by the precipitate opposition of the lights and darks in the close and deep folds; suavity, grace, and accord, by those more open and extended; and opportunities are every where afforded of breaking all unavoidably parallel, rectangular, and other too definite and regular appearances, by the beautiful and variegated angles that are formed between the origin and the more dispersed parts of these folds. Almost all compositions afford these accessional advantages, as, however differently fashioned, the dresses of the people of all ages have been more or less formed out of the same materials. The further use that may be made of the uniformity and variety of the colours of these draperies will be taken notice of in our next discourse; but as every colour, whether simple or compound, has its proper chiaroscuro, consisting of all the possible degrees of depth or strength of hue, from the slightest or weakest tincture downwards, and as the selection of any of these degrees, and the situation which it may occupy, is often optional, all these considerations, taken together, afford an infinity of resource for adjusting the composition and chiaroscuro, for continuing assimilated forms, or for interrupting, breaking, and variegating them to any desired extent; and this is equally pursuable in the lights and darks, in the middle tint, and in the reflexes.

Thus with attention, and amorous assiduity, it is almost always in the power of an artist to superinduce an harmonious and sentimentally expressive chiaroscuro upon that ordinary distribution of light and shade which natural bodies necessarily exhibit.

I have, in a former discourse, had occasion to take notice, that architecture (where it was not a mechanical art dependent on mere convenience, and upon the rule and plummet)

was an emanation of the arts of design, and consequently in every thing that regarded its more liberal concerns, its beautiful or majestical effects, as a whole and parts, it was the pure offspring of drawing or modelling, and absolutely and solely depended upon the composition of forms, and the composition of chiaroscuro and rilievo, which those forms produced. The same principles of uniformity and variety, or of variegated unity, which must be previously pursued in so arranging and constructing the figures and general forms of a picture, that they may serve as a proper substratum for that chiaroscuro which brings them to the sight as an harmonious totality—these same principles, and these *only*, are the constituents of all similar agreeable effects in architecture, since the architect must have these effects present to his mind, that they may follow as consequences, from the arrangement of forms which enter into the composition of his buildings. These laws of variegated unity being grounded upon the just consideration of the human faculties, and accommodated (as was before observed) to our abilities and inabilities of perception, they are, therefore, equally applicable to every whole and its parts, and are great agents of satisfaction in all other arts, as well as in those which depend upon vision: nay, they are applicable to nature herself, which may be made a work of art, with no small accumulation of advantage; as it is evident in gardening, the laying out of grounds, and other matters: and every man conversant with the higher poetry, must have often observed the ingenious subordinations, the contrasts, and all the artful necessary expedients that have been employed to give force and eclat to the principal action, or a character and unity to the whole. But not to stray from our own immediate concerns. When the examples of beautiful and majestical arrangments of relative magnitudes and forms in architecture were once executed, they might be easily copied and multiplied by the rule and compass of mere mechanics; but the history of architecture and architects, both in Greece and Italy, affords one continued chain of proof, that all the great inventors, restorers, and improvers of architecture were (as might naturally have been expected) painters or sculptors. This, by-the-bye, as it neither suits our time or occasion to go

into any historical details.* But what is immediately for our purpose, and was indeed my inducement for the mentioning architecture in this place, is the occasion it affords for the illustration of the utility and importance of chiaroscuro, and the absolute necessity of its being a leading consideration in the fabrication of all objects presented to the sight. Attending only to the actual fact, without entering into the reasons or the necessities which might have occasioned it, we must confess, that many of our churches and public buildings of the last age have the same bad appearance as Chinese pictures, where there is no light and shade to give brilliancy, repose, and majesty of effect: mere walls inlaid with pilasters or half columns, unconnected perforations for windows and doors, and nothing to relieve the sight from a dull disgusting monotony of light, without shade. This hateful insipid uniformity cannot be removed by diversifying forms on the same surface, like mere outlines on paper. They want the force of chiaroscuro to give them that rilievo which the sight necessarily demands, and without which they are not forms, but sketches and indications of form. In the sound examples of art, when pilasters or half columns have been employed, and consequently the entablature deprived of its accustomed projecture, they were either accompanied with arched ways, which produced the necessary quantity of shadow, as in the Theatre of Marcellus, the Colosseum, and many others, or their continuity was interrupted by other more retired parts or objects, to which they serve as illuminated portions or masses. Where prominent parts could not be obtained for the projection of adequate shade, voids have been introduced, as they answer the same end, but in a less degree: they serve

* The first architect mentioned by Vasari is Buono, a sculptor and architect of the 12th century; the Campanile at Pisa was commenced by one Guglielmo, and Bonanno a sculptor; the next architect mentioned by Vasari is Marchionne, a sculptor of Arezzo; the next are, Jacopo a German, Lapo, and his pupil, the celebrated Arnolfo di Lapo, who commenced the cathedral of Florence. These were followed by Fuccio, Niccola and Giovanni Pisano, Lino of Siena, Margaritone of Arezzo, and Giotto, all sculptors, and the two last painters also, as well as architects. Agostino and Agnolo of Siena, Andrea Pisano, Orcagna, Brunelleschi, Michelozzi, and Juliano da Maiano, were likewise all celebrated sculptors, as well as architects.—W.

as a shade when the object is in shadow. In all cases where this uniformity of surface and equally diffused light is supportable, shadow, or what is equivalent to it, will be somewhere found to have occasioned it, either by gloomy trees or other dark objects connected with the view. Canaletto would make good pictures of our worst churches, by employing his skill in the relative picturesque accompaniments.

Whatever impressions of boldness and masculine vigour, whatever soft and feminine gracefulness, and whatever easy, splendid luxuriance, men of taste and sentiment have discovered in the three Grecian orders, these peculiar characteristics are in nothing more discoverable than in their several chiaroscuros. If any man doubt this, let him compare a model or a shaded drawing of the Temple of Minerva*, or of the Portico of the Pantheon, with the mere geometrical or perspective outline. These geometrical and proportionate measures and mere lines, are to the sight little better than nonentities, until they receive being and realisation from rilievo and the chiaroscuro which follows it. Let us even suppose that the Corinthian columns on the sides of St. Martin's church had been entire, yet so as to be in contact with the wall, how frittered and meagre would this lateral view appear in comparison of the noble portico in front, sustained as it is by the majestic shade flung into its intercolumniations by the projection of its entablature. The Temple at Nismes, and that of Fortuna Virilis, being nearly the same with this of St. Martin's, the same objection will lie equally to all. However, it may be worth observing, that if this difference of distribution in the front and sides of the same buildings arose from a desire of saving expense, the convenience of windows afforded by this discontinuance of lateral projecting columns is, at least, to us a valuable compensation for any thing that may have been lost as to effect. As to the ancients, who wanted nothing of this convenience, it is a departure from the spirit and character of their work, for which no other than an economical reason can be given, as they appear not to have sought for, but rather to have excluded all other light but that of fire. Their religious rites and ceremonies performed by torchlight, in a dark quadrangular building, without any other

* The Parthenon at Athens.—W.

aperture but the door, and thickly beset all around with, as it were, a dark grove of columns, the very forms of those columns and their capitals, particularly some of the most ancient in Egypt—all these things (however improved by successive and ingenious refinements) do indeed strongly indicate a commemoration and representation of usages which could only have arisen amongst the Cimmerians*, or such-like people.

To descend even to the Gothic churches, many of them are so disposed (whether with intention, or, perhaps, from an unconscious feeling of the beauties and general forms of the ancient colonnades, which they imitated in their own barbarous way; or rather, these general forms were the last things forgotten, and had survived all the smaller particular details which were lost in the gradual corruption of architecture), these Gothic churches are so disposed, I say, that their cloisters, aisles, and the different partitions of their front and lateral views, almost always present the eye with large masses of shade, which give the necessary support and value to the parts illuminated, and produce such a rilievo and effect in the totality, as makes a considerable impression of awe and grandeur on the mind, in despite of its very barbarous and defective particulars.

Thus it is apparent that variegated unity, and its consequent rilievo of a proportionate light and shade, is the operating cause of the beautiful arrangements in architecture, as well as in painting and sculpture. There is, however, this remarkable difference in those arts: in architecture, the proportionate arrangement, and its rilievo of light and shade is, I had almost said, the whole of the art; at least it

* The Cimmerii (Cimbri Celts?) were fabulously said to dwell in caves, from which the light of day was excluded; a figure for the peculiarities of cold mountainous regions, and the long dark nights of the north. The Cimmerii had neither morning nor evening light, a circumstance not so much owing to the absence of the sun as the partial light of mountain valleys, and the constant mists of the woody and marshy lands of the north; they must have had light enough in the summer, if by the Cimmerii is merely meant those invaders of the south who dwelt in the northernmost parts of Europe and Asia. They are mentioned by Homer (Od. xi. 14.), and other great poets of antiquity. The peculiarities of the Cimmerian climate, says Plutarch (Marius, c. 11.), gave Homer his idea of the Region of Shades (Νέκυια). — W.

is of much more essential consequence to that art than it is even to painting and sculpture, and for this plain reason, that the particular inanimate square, or curve ingredients of the architectonic composition, have but little value or interest in themselves when compared with the various intrinsic beauties of animate and vegetative life, which enter into the composition of the painter or sculptor. The successful management of this variegated unity and rilievo of light and shade can only be expected from the skilful designer. It is he alone who, from the sure and expansive principles of composition and chiaroscuro, can pursue beauty and sublimity in a thousand different ways; whilst without these essential requisites of design men are but mere builders, and must unavoidably copy, or plunder from the works of those who are gone before them; and in either case the absurdities that may result from the difference of climate, local situation, and from ill-according particulars, however beautiful in their own original proper arrangement, are too obvious to be mentioned. These absurdities happen frequently, when *gentlemen*, from a little reading in Palladio or Serlio, will venture to become their own architects, or to interfere and obtrude their notions on the artists they employ.

In pursuing this important part of the distribution and effects of light and shade, it gives me no small pleasure to find that I have been led to take notice of a particular which reflects great honour on our own age, as compared with the last. Some of the most distinguished architects, both here and on the continent, are in the number of our ablest designers. Of this truth our own recollection will furnish such an instance in those very admirable drawings of our worthy professor of architecture*, which are annually exhibited round this chair, as makes it altogether unnecessary for me to offer further proofs of the sound enlarged principles of design and harmonious arrangement of effects which have been so happily pursued by the architects of the present century.

With respect to the chiaroscuro of sculpture, it is to be considered in two different ways,—as the sculpture is a principal, or as it is only an agent. Where it is a principal, as in groups and figures in the round, the masses of light and

* Thomas Sandby.—W.

shade, or, in other words, the agreeable or majestic effect of the work in all its possible views, cannot be too much attended to. The taste of lines and harmonious flow of the parts or several members of the work (whether a group or a single figure), their variety and their combined unity, are the efficient causes of that light and shade which give ease and satisfaction to the eye of the spectator, and engage him, as it were, to enter into the contemplation of those still more essential beauties of a higher order, which result from the sublime conception of the form and character, and the graceful or pathetical expression of the subject.

As to the oppositions of chiaroscuro that are effected by differently coloured marbles, it would take up too much of our time to offer reasons why it ought to be rejected altogether. To speak my own feelings of this matter, I never see it with pleasure; the less the opposition in the colour of the materials, the less offended is my sight. Also the mixture of bronze with marble in any imitation of natural objects, is to me always disgusting. There are, no doubt, great authorities for the using bronze as the material of statues, and certainly it may, from the weight and sensibleness of its colour, do extremely well, perhaps better than any thing else in insulated works which have the air for a back ground, and are to be seen at a distance, as is the case of Falconet's monument of Peter the Great*, that of Marcus Aurelius†, and many others; but in most other cases, in those of enclosed situations, to repeat my own feelings once more, I would wish to have the bronze gilt. The light and shade of a gilt figure is no doubt less agreeable, I was going to say less natural, than that of a figure in marble, but it is,

* At St. Petersburg: it is equestrian and colossal, and is placed on an immense piece of rock, brought to the spot from a great distance. — W.

† This is the only ancient bronze equestrian statue preserved to us; it stands before the Capitol at Rome; but stood formerly before the Lateran palace, where it was placed by Clement III., in the year 1187: it stood originally in the forum, before the arch of Severus. This statue still retains traces of the gilding with which it was originally covered. Its preservation is attributed to its being supposed, during the middle ages, to have been the statue of Constantine: it went formerly by the name of the Cavallo di Constantino. Michelangelo set it up in its present position, in 1538. (Platner, *Beschreibung der Stadt. Rom.* iii. i. 101.) — W.

notwithstanding, much more eligible in confined situations than that of bronze.

Sculpture may, in all sepulchral and other such monuments, be considered as a principal or sole object, carrying with it its own laws; and, from the junction of alto and basso-rilievo, affords a noble opportunity for those artist-like attentions to the fine effects of composition and chiaroscuro, of which it is susceptible in a high degree, and of which some great moderns have given such illustrious specimens, as incontrovertibly demonstrate the advantage of the undertaking, whether there had been any ancient examples for it or not. As works of this nature must be regulated by the consideration of the distance at which they are seen, and their aspects respecting the spectator, and also respecting the light; whether they receive it perpendicularly, laterally, or in front; their situation ought always to be previously determined, in order to make these essential circumstances coincide with the just and happy expression of the subject; which, I shall again repeat, ought, in all works whatever, to appear the chief and governing principle, from whence the mode of composition and chiaroscuro issued as from their source.

I could wish not only for your sake, and that of the public at large, but also on my own account, that our collection of plaster casts in the Academy was more ample. In the number of excellent things that must be attended to during one's residence abroad, the impressions of many of them will unavoidably not be so fresh on the memory after some years as to enable a man to speak of them with confidence; more particularly on such an occasion as the present—but from what I recollect of the happy effects produced by the skilful arrangements of alto and basso-rilievo, and the perspective imitations of the aerial as well as lineal de-graduations of the object in Algardi's famous work at St. Peter's*, in that of Puget at Paris†, and some others; this mode of process is capable of producing the sublimest and most ex-

* The alto-rilievo of "La Fuga d'Attila," or the flight of Attila, which is placed over one of the altars in St. Peter's at Rome. It is the largest alto-rilievo in the world; the St. Leo and the Attila are about ten feet high. — W.

† The basso-rilievo of Alexander and Diogenes, now at Versailles.—W

tensive effects in sculpture. What should hinder that it might not even be associated with groups in the round? For my own part I cannot help being strongly of opinion, that such a subject as the Niobe would come upon the eye of the spectator with a much more collected force, if treated by a great artist in this way, than in the scattered manner in which this composition appeared in the Villa Medici. It may be thought that more might be lost than gained by this procedure, and that it would be sacrificing the great advantage afforded by the different views of sculptured figures in the round. But let it be considered, that such a composition as I speak of, formed of detached figures, and of those in alt and in bas-relief, insensibly vanishing almost into the intaglio of a proper and significant back-ground; such a composition, besides excluding all foreign impertinent matter, that must necessarily detract from the impression of the subject upon the mind, would, on the contrary, afford a fit opportunity of indicating all such historical and other opposite becoming circumstances of the scene, as might urge on and give this impression of the subject all its completion: and from the very nature of vision with respect to near or more remote objects, such a composition as this would not be so strictly confined to any individual perspective point as to exclude a great variety of views of the advanced figures*; it would admit of almost (nay, to the full) as many as the composition of the Niobe does at present; for it was evident, from the state of the work, that it was not intended to be viewed on all sides indifferently, perhaps it was even proper it should not; for however differently it might be with Puget's famous Milo, Le Pautre's Æneas and Anchises, and Coustou's Alexander and Bucephalus, which very properly admit of being seen on all sides; yet there can be no doubt, or at least I have none, but that the sculptor of the Niobe reasoned rightly as far as he went, and that the

* The great objection to this species of work is, that, except in a particular light, the parts in *alto*-relief cast shadows upon those in lower relief, which are yet designed to be too *remote* to be really influenced by any such shadows in nature: nothing can compensate for this defect; the shadows are fatal to the effect of the work. The *linear* perspective, also, where there can be no *aerial* perspective, is very offensive. This style of relief is now deprecated by the best judges.—W.

adequate expression of such extensive subjects as necessarily comprehend a concatenation of many circumstances, requires that the figures be more or less presented to the eye of the spectator under certain aspects, the most noble and the most proper; and, upon inspection, it will appear that the Laocoon, and even the Apollo Belvedere, and many other single figures, were intended for niches, or at least were not intended to be so insulated as to be seen all round.

I am almost tempted to mention Bernini's Four Doctors of the Church, and the glory surrounding St. Peter's Chair, as an admirable specimen of this mixed composition of the different kinds of rilievo, and certainly it is a most animated, noble performance; no doubt, it must be admitted that his style of design is sometimes overdone, too exquisite; and his judgment may be said not to keep pace with his extreme sensibility, and the noble force of his disposition. However, this charge will hold good but in few instances, and his design, in general, is full of intelligence, the very reverse of unformed Dutch vulgarity; and his imagination, which was always that of a great man, cannot be too much esteemed.

About fifty years ago there happened at Rome one of the noblest occasions for a stupendous composition of this mixed rilievo in the Fontana di Trevi. But from powerful favour, or some other such wretched consideration, the pope unfortunately threw the work away upon a mere architect, and Filippo Valle, with other sculptors, being but under-strappers in the business, were ill-fated instruments in a hand that knew not how to employ them to any purpose of advantage: the work eventually turned out to be a disgrace to the pope, to those who executed it, and, above all, to the city in which it was erected, and affords a striking lesson to succeeding generations, of the folly of taking design, and the composition of forms and chiaroscuro, out of the hands of those who can manage them, and committing them to men whose views extend no farther than the square and compass. From such perverse folly, what can be expected but monuments of expensive and lost labour, without amenity of design, effect, or any other valuable leading quality to recommend them? Had the whole of this great machine of the Fontana di Trevi been committed to any one of those sculptors, or had any historical painter, or such a man as

Bernini, the designing of it, what might not have been done with such an opportunity of one great concentrated suite of views! I say concentrated, because, as this could not be an insulated composition, viewed on the four sides, like the so justly celebrated fountain in the Piazza Navona, the whole impression of the subject here would be entire, would be one, and not many, as a significant and co-operating background would happily concentrate all the views in front.

But to return, and to finish what I had to say of the desirable increase of our little collection of plaster casts in the Academy; it is, on many accounts, a thing most ardently to be wished; for as almost all our great houses are filled with old foreign pictures, of one kind or other, but, at best, of little importance to the *national* reputation, and as our churches, the natural receptacle for all interesting, serious, and manly art, can afford no prospect for the exercise of national ability, whilst, to the disgrace of the age, the mistaken delicacy of ignorance, and abused, superannuated, fanatical prejudices, are unfortunately allowed to stand so much in the way; whilst matters are likely to remain after this fashion, it would be at least some amusement, and prevent the ennui of inactivity, to have it in our power to lounge over what the other artists had done, who were more fortunately circumstanced; to compare the casts of the Curtius at the Borghese, of some bas-reliefs at the Villa Medici, and other ancient works of this kind, with some of the best works of the moderns; to trace the modern bas-relief from its first, and very respectable attempt at picturesque effects, in Ghiberti's Gates of the Baptisterium*, which we have, to the most famous of those of later date, which we have not. In the ancient bas-reliefs there certainly is not much attention paid to any de-

* Of San Giovanni at Florence. These are the gates which Michelangelo said were fit to be the gates of paradise. The modelling, however, of the figures of these gates can scarcely be duly appreciated, owing to their blackness; this objection would be obviated in a plaster cast. The two principal or central gates were finished in 1424; each is divided into five compartments, in which the subjects (from the Old Testament) are treated as pictures, that is, in perspective, and in various degrees of relief. They are engraved in Lasinio's *Le tre porte del Battisterio di Firenze.* Flor. 1823; in a larger size by Feodor for the sculptor, H. Keller, Rome, 1798; and in the works of Cicognara, d'Agincourt, and others. — W.

graduation of objects and their effects. Their composition seldom or never extends further than two plans; and although the figures in the interior or second plan are of lower relief, and produce, consequently, and very properly, a less forcible effect of chiaroscuro, yet the lineal perspective does not here correspond with the aerial, for the figures upon both those plans are generally of the same size. It may be said, and even insisted upon, that the second plan seems intended for little else than to give that plenitude of objects which the mere arrangement of forms required, and, consequently, that no perspective de-graduation was attempted by the ancients: but this is not satisfactory; there seems an error, and it is better to confess it; for undoubtedly the comparative diminution of force and rilievo naturally presupposes a comparative diminution of magnitude. These bas-reliefs have merit enough in other respects to preserve their rank in the art, and it is probable that most of them were placed in such situations, that they were more or less governed by other laws than those which arose out of themselves.

When sculpture is only an agent, as it is in the frieze, and other parts of architecture; its effects of chiaroscuro should become subordinate, and, like every other member, appear only as a co-operating part in the general effect of the whole building. This, I believe, will be found to be the true reason for what may be thought the imperfect, inartificial mode of execution, which it appears, by the fragments in the Academy, was adopted in the bas-reliefs of the frieze on the temple of Minerva at Athens. The figures which were intended to appear nearest the eye are inclining to the flat; they have, comparatively, the least convexity, and come off from their ground in a bold, square, and detached way, with a rilievo similar to that of the Triglyphs and Pateras, ordinarily used in those situations. Thus the lights being larger, and less broken, the whole appearance of those advanced objects is comparatively more preserved and distinct than the others, and the effect proper to the occasion is perhaps better obtained than it could have been in any other way.*

If these works were, from architectonic and optical consi-

* Some excellent remarks on the effect of light on these and similar works will be found in the article on Basso Rilievo in the *Penny Cyclopædia*, written by Mr. Eastlake. — W.

derations, solely calculated to produce their effect in a certain given situation distant from the sight, it can be no wonder, nor is it any imputation of want of skill in Phidias, or his workmen, that they should appear very differently, and much wanting when brought near the eye, into a situation the reverse of that for which they were intended. Had they been calculated for the panels of an arched way, almost on a level with the spectator, like those beautiful bas-reliefs in the Arch of Titus, there can be no doubt but that a style of execution directly the reverse ought necessarily to have been adopted, and would have been adopted; for the knowledge which influenced the conduct of the artist in the one mode does actually imply the cognisance of the other.

This procedure, where the most advanced objects are kept comparatively flat, naturally produces a broad light on those advanced objects, with smart shadows or touches about the arms, eyes, nose, and other associated projecting and engraved parts, which are relieved and well set off by the more interior figures, in consequence of their being more rounded, and thereby affording a greater quantity of middle tint and scarcity of light. This, as was before observed, is, perhaps, the most skilful and best method which could have been adopted for producing an advantageous effect in objects so situated. Something of this kind is observable in the famous basso-rilievo, vulgarly called the Trimalchio*, of which there is an excellent one in Mr. Townley's collection.

The figures and objects about them in the first plan are comparatively broad and flat, whilst those in the second and third plans are rounder and more relieved: indeed, they are too much relieved, projecting shades too forcible, and by tha means producing a false chiaroscuro, which militates with the general effect, and is in direct opposition to the perspective diminution of magnitude, by which this ancient sculptor has properly enough intimated the distance at which those figures are seen, but which ought to have been accompanied with a decrease of force and rilievo proportionate to this

* Trimalcion; that is, from the supposition that it represented the feast of Trimalcion, in which Petronius satirised the debaucheries of Nero (Petr. Arb. c. 30. 59.). The subject of the bas-relief in question is the visit of Bacchus to Icarius. (See *Townley Gallery*, Soc. Dif. U. K. vol. ii. p. 141.). — W.

decrease of magnitude. It is only by this inseparable correspondence in the force and magnitude of objects that we are habituated to judge of the comparative proximity or distance of those objects, both in nature and art. It is observable, then, that the happiest and least faulty examples amongst the ancient basso-rilievos are either like this in the frieze of the Temple of Minerva, or those on the Arch of Titus—those in the Villa Medici, and many others, where little more is attempted than the representing figures on one plan. When they endeavoured to do any thing more, and to carry on the other parts of the scene, through many plans, into the distance, certain failures, from an ignorance of those laws of vision, called perspective, become more or less apparent, in proportion to the extent of what is attempted. There is no need of palliation here; and as the ancient artists have always too much merit not to ensure our admiration, we shall, notwithstanding the blind zeal of many of their indiscriminate admirers, who will see nothing but perfection in what they have done, and notwithstanding the rashness and impropriety of looking for more than they have done, we shall, I say, proceed to observe, that this ignorance of perspective is often but too visible, not only in their marble bas-reliefs, but on the reverses of their medals, and in their paintings discovered at Herculaneum and at Rome. All these examples, taken together, form such a body of evidence, as would force us to conclude that the ancient painters, their sculptors in bas-relief, and medalists, were incapable of carrying these arts to any considerable degree of perfection in any scenes where perspective, many plans, and distances occurred.

It is being very uncandid and trifling with us, to affirm, as many of our zealots do, that the ancients thought this perspective appearance of objects of too little consequence to bestow much attention on it; and, as from themselves, they observe, further, in confirmation of this, that the effect of the principal objects would be disturbed by the clatter and rilievo of objects in the back-ground; that the violent inflection of the vanishing lines of buildings would have a bad effect; and that the alto-rilievo is a bad taste, and better avoided, since nothing can be more disgusting than the clumps of alto-rilievo on the Arch of Severus and on the Antonine

Column; and, in fine, that perhaps perspective representations were improper, and their admission ought to be precluded in sculptured scenes of rilievo. This cavilling and chicanery, thus substituted for true and just reasoning, might, with a proper allowance for human frailty, be excusable in an affair of religion, or of national or deep personal interest. But in estimating the works of taste and art, executed by people whom we have not known, and who have been dead two thousand years since, this is surely altogether unworthy the good citizen of a community, where the same arts are still in practice.*

Let it be, then honestly, allowed, that perspective is necessary for the completion of basso-rilievo, as well as of painting. The ancients were too sagacious and too much in love with art not to see this, and endeavour after it; and in what remains both of their basso-rilievos and paintings, the same instances which prove their ignorance and ill success in those perspective representations, afford also a manifest proof of their eagerness and solicitude to attain the ability of giving this last perfection to art.

A conclusion thus resulting from such a body of facts, and spreading so widely in different arts, cannot be disturbed and controverted by conjectural inferences from pas-

* It should be borne in mind that the paintings of Pompeii are the ordinary chamber decorations of an insignificant provincial town, and that they were executed at an age when, according to Roman writers themselves, the art was in a disgraceful state. If we do but compare the Pompeii remains with our own provincial, or even metropolitan chamber decorations, from the establishment of the arts down to the present day, we shall find the comparison greatly in favour of the ancients. There have been, however, many noble specimens of the art discovered at Pompeii and Herculaneum, both as regards facility of execution and composition. The great Mosaic Battle of Alexander, discovered in 1831, is, even as a composition, worthy of any age of art, and has much merit of execution, even as a Mosaic; though, from its great superiority as a work of art, it is evidently the copy of some celebrated picture of some former period: it abounds in skilful foreshortenings, and is, on the whole, a noble battle-piece. In the mere mural decorations, also, of Pompeii there are many successful attempts at perspective. It is well known that the Greeks were acquainted with perspective, for perspective scenery (scenography) was introduced on the Greek stage as early as the time of Æschylus, though, perhaps, not generally until the time of Sophocles. (Compare Vitruvius, vii. *præf.*; Diogenes, ii. 125; Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* xxxv. 37. 40; and Aristotle, *Poetica*, 4.) — W

sages in ancient writers, which intimate a knowledge of the true laws of optics and perspective.

The curious passage in the fourth book of Lucretius, respecting the contraction of a long portico into the visual point, and the passage in the proem of Vitruvius, to his seventh book, respecting the writings on these subjects of vision, by Agatharcus, Democritus, and Anaxagoras *, as well as other passages in ancient authors, particularly two, which were some years since communicated to me by Mr. Nicolaides †, a learned Greek, are irreconcileable with those

* The following is the important passage alluded to: — "When Æschylus was exhibiting tragedies at Athens, Agatharcus made a scene, and left a treatise upon it. By the assistance of this treatise, Democritus and Anaxagoras wrote upon the same subject, showing how the extension of rays from a fixed point of sight should be made to correspond to lines as they appear in nature, so that the images of buildings in *painted scenes* might have the appearance of reality; and although painted upon *flat vertical surfaces, some parts should seem to recede, and others to come forward.*" — W.

† Note communicated by Mr. Nicolaides.

Heliodorus, the philosopher, made a division of optics, at the end of his first book of optics, printed at Paris in the year 1657: into what is called optics peculiarly, catoptricks, and into a third part, which he calls Scenographicon (the drawing of bodies). Of this he speaks thus: —

"The scenographic part of optics examines how the drawings of edifices should be drawn. For, whereas, objects do not appear as they are in reality, the architects endeavour to make their works appear not in their true proportion, but in that in which they should appear.

"The end of the architect is to make his work appear proportional in appearance, and to invent remedies, as well as he can, against the deceptions of the sight, not caring for the true symmetry and proportion, but for that of the eye.

"Thus, therefore, because a cylindrical column would appear broken in the middle by becoming narrow in respect to the sight, in this part he makes it broader.

"Likewise he draws a circle, not as a circle, but as a section of a rectangular cone: and the many, and very high pillars he draws in other proportions both in number and height."

Such is the care of a maker of a colossus, to give an apparent symmetry of his work, that it may appear proportional to the sight, but not in reality. For the works placed on a great height do not appear as they exist.

The other division of optics is by Proclus, a Platonic philosopher, in his comments upon the first book of Euclid.

"Optic is a daughter of geometry, for it makes use of lines of the sight and angles which are constituted of them. It is divided into what is

incontrovertible facts, respecting the state of art, which are so glaringly testified in the remains of ancient basso-rilievos and paintings.

It is, indeed, much to be regretted that ancient artists were not better enabled to complete what they attempted often in their marble bas-reliefs, and more frequently on their medals; instead of the inartificial, wretched scrawls which they have made of the representation of their temples and other buildings, what could they not have preserved for us, had they been furnished with the same skill and union of rilievo and intaglio perspectively employed, by which the moderns have been enabled ingeniously to convert the reverses of their medals and medallions into important archives, in which are recorded, and will be transmitted to posterity, all those beautiful specimens of modern architecture, and other arts, with which, since the fifteenth century, the reverses of the papal and other medals have been so elegantly, and so usefully adorned? How much should we be delighted to have a view remaining of that miracle of art (which it must have been) Trajan's Forum; or with those wonders of the interior or exterior views of the statue and sanctuary scene about it, at Elis, or at Ephesus? What ecstasy to have such works executed with a skill of rilievo and intaglio, similar to that which is employed in the medallions of the interior and exterior views of St. Peter's at Rome, or of St. Paul's in London!

It is true that this admirable union of rilievo, intaglio, and skilful perspective arrangement, is often ill employed in our modern reverses, on very worthless designs; but this is an abuse, and is chargeable on the artist or his employer, and can never be brought in argument against the art itself. The same powers of execution which would delight us when employed upon a design of Michelangelo, or any other great

properly called optics, which accounts for the false appearance of visible things, occasioned by their distance. As for example, for the apparent coincidence of parallel lines; for the sight of quadrangular objects in the form of circular — into catoptricks, which treats of the various reflections effected upon some particular bodies, by which means the similarity of external things is to be perceived, — and into what is called sciographic, which teaches how the apparent objects in pictures should appear neither improportional, nor deformed, on account of the distances and heights of the objects painted."

man, would not fail to produce disgust, when thrown away upon a contemptible design of some inferior artist.

I must again repeat it, that this happy union of high and low rilievo, perspectively sinking into a proper intaglio, is, with the knowledge of the eighteenth century, capable of producing the sublimest and most wonderful effects in sculpture, and would be the ultimatum of that art. Even such a group as the Laocoon, situated in a proper corresponding back-ground, would receive an additional interest by being only the principal in such a scene. *

Thus much at present for the consideration of lights and darks, their proportionate rilievo, and their advantageous distribution. † It will be for our purpose in the close of this discourse, to impress upon the recollection of the student, as a fact of the utmost importance, that the happy and artist-like management of the light and shade of figures can have no solid and reputable basis but in *sound drawing*.

Skilfully to ascertain the precise commencement, termina-

* Barry's customary acuteness singularly fails him here; what sort of effect would even the noblest design have in the back-ground, when cut up by the shadows of such a principal group as the Laocoon? The application of this very principle has deprived the gates of Ghiberti of more than half their beauty. Linear and aerial perspective cannot be separated; and if this principle is applied to reliefs in sculpture, colour must also be applied to remove the remoter parts from the surface; but even then half only of the objection is removed, if any part of the design is in high relief, which must throw a shadow on the back-ground. — W.

† Whether bas-relief be large, and in marble, or small, on a medal or coin, or impressed from the lapidary's work in intaglio, the principles which constitute its excellence are ever and invariably the same. It is susceptible of all the fine qualities of Da Vinci, Raphael, Michelangelo, and Carracci; whatever there be exquisite in the Grecian gusto may be united to all the vigour of effect in the Flemish school.

Hedlinger[1] has done much as to the general effect, spirit, and, above all, the variegated beauty and harmony of his compositions; his piquant light, sustained by the varieties of middle and lower tints, resulting from his admirably diversified surface into all the gradations of quiescence and relief, where nothing is repeated either as to magnitude, form, force, or rilievo, and where whatever Rubens, Vandyck, Both, Berghem, or Rembrandt, could effect by the magic of chiaroscuro, as far as his compositions go, is most gracefully attended to — whether in his portraits, the hair, draperies, &c., or in his reverses.

[1] Johann Carl Hedlinger, a celebrated Swiss medalist: he died in 1771, in his eightieth year. — W.

tion, and variegated forms of the lights, half lights, and shades, their just degrees of force and tenderness, which ought to be the sole result of the several configurations, aspects, proximity, and remoteness of the figures ; to ascertain and render these with a becoming skill, is as much the part of intelligent and accurate drawing, as fixing the character and the contour. And as the arrangement of these several particular enlightened and shaded objects must depend on the composition, and consequently arise out of the very nature of the subject itself, it must then appear evident, that the becoming and adequate chiaroscuro, or the advantageous arrangement of all these several lights and shades, with those other naturally bright and obscure objects of a picture which produce in the whole result an expressive, sentimental, and harmonious totality, can only arise out of the most essential considerations of art.

The materials which it employs, being necessarily absolute in their figure and determination, must, then, be derived from intelligent drawing. The collocation of these materials form the composition proper to the subject. And the whole must form a just and proper ground-work for those enchanting hues of colour which decorate the surface, and give the last finish and perfection to objects.

As the chiaroscuro is so intimately connected with the colouring of a picture, and is, indeed, its natural basis and support, we shall (God willing) resume the further consideration of it in the discourse on *colouring,* where their united extent, and the comparative merits of the great artists whose excellence lay this way, will be best seen.

This discourse on colouring, and the comparative merits of the great colourists, I shall offer to your consideration at our next meeting.

Lecture VI. — On Colouring

Gentlemen,

When the art was in an immature state, and its different parts were in growth and progress, the standard or idea of

perfection of which it was susceptible did, with the people at large, and, perhaps, with the greatest part of the artists themselves, little more than keep pace with those works which were actually produced at the time. The general taste and idea of perfection went on advancing only in proportion to the advanced degrees which the artists had attained in the perfection of form, or in the expression, or in rilievo and colouring; or afterwards in the uniting of all these as so many constituent parts of a more expanded or cultivated whole. Hence the admiration and praises which have been bestowed upon the rudest, the more limited, or the more extended and cultivated productions of the several periods of this progress are expressed in the same hearty terms of warmth and excess.

The history of art does not mention any work which was received with a more extensive, extraordinary eclat and admiration than the Madonna of Cimabue, which is yet to be seen at Santa Maria Novella; although it is very certain that this work, with all its past celebrity, would not, in the estimation of our age, and considered merely for the skill of the artist, carry away the palm from the queen of hearts or diamonds. *

The very great deficiencies of this work of Cimabue might, perhaps, induce some to think that he could not possibly have availed himself of the inspection of nature when he painted it. But the imitations of early art are exactly like those of children; nothing is seen even in the spectacle before us, until it be in some measure otherwise previously known and sought for, and numberless observable differences between the ages of ignorance and those of knowledge show how much the contraction or extension of our sphere of vision depends upon other considerations than the simple return of our mere natural optics. The people, then, of those ages

* Here again Barry exhibits his partiality for the *material* in art: there is an exalted sentiment and expression in this primeval work far beyond the attainment of the mass of *draftsmen* and *colourists* of the later *academic ages*. This picture was finished some short time after the year 1266, when Charles of Anjou visited the painter's studio to see it, and such was the popular jubilee when it was shown on that occasion to the people, that the district acquired the name of the Borgo Allegri; and there is to this day a street of that name near the Port' alla Croce. The picture when finished was carried to the church in public procession. — W.

only saw so much, and admired it, because they knew no more.*

It behoves us, then, young gentlemen, to reflect that when, from various intercourse and communication, the public obtains possession of an idea of art, as a great complex whole, its constituent parts being brought to maturity, and happily and extensively united, it will be then absurd to expect, that out of compliment to whatever narrow faculties we may choose to cultivate, this public taste shall go back again to what it has long since left, and bestow praise and admiration upon such little particulars of colour or resemblance as were wont to arrest its attention in the infancy of things. Such indulgence is not now to be thought of, but perhaps quite the reverse; for unfortunately in proportion as the world grows more enlightened, fastidiousness, and a useless and too critical nicety may be expected to increase also, and sometimes to the no small annoyance of the truest feelings and judgment.

Many of the old Venetian painters, even Giorgione, and others of the same time, did in their pursuit of colouring, of force, brilliancy, and beauty of effect, overlook almost all the other parts of the art. Although this deficiency was not imputed as any drawback from their reputation, and probably entered as little into the then public idea as into that of the artists; yet, as was before observed, things are now very differently circumstanced, and there cannot be the least doubt but that more censure than celebrity would follow from such a procedure at this time. The higher requisites of the art, which have been the subject of the preceding discourses, cannot at present be dispensed with, and the persuasion of this truth is so generally felt, that when an artist is not well grounded in these essentials, and has, from the objections which may be offered, frequent occasion to alter the drawing, and to disturb and to rub in and out different parts of his work whilst he is painting it; however well he may be acquainted with the use and practice of colours, yet even this will not always be apparent in his work: the loads of discordant colour which must be the consequence of such irre

* It was admired by the people, not as an extraordinary work of art, which, however, it was, but as an object of devotion, of a grandeur surpassing all others that they were acquainted with. — W.

solution and frequent alterations, must naturally destroy the purity of the tints, and ultimately produce destructive fermentations, muddiness, and mutability; at the same time that it defaces, or will not admit any of that beauty of execution and penciling which is the natural offspring of a familiar knowledge of the configuration of the several detailed parts, and of certainty and masterly precision in the drawing of them. This inconvenience was not experienced by the old colourists, for as they were indulged in the narrow limits they prescribed to themselves; whatever proportions or forms they first hit upon, these were adhered to steadily; as but little regard was paid to any thing but the arrangement and conduct of their colours, their several tints, and foundations of tints, were therefore laid undisturbed in their places, and brilliancy, purity, permanence, and a handsome, workmanlike method of handling followed of course.*

For reasons not very dissimilar, one seldom finds an ill-coloured picture in the Dutch school; the little more or the little less in the drawing could make no difference worth attending to, where they regarded not so much the beauty or perfection of the human form, as the contrary: it was not easy to err in the drawing and composition of works formed out of trite, vulgar, slattern matter, level to the meanest and most mechanical capacity.

As a good method of colouring can only be obtained by proceeding with decision and promptitude, whether at the expense of all the grand essentials of art, or in a strict conformity with them; and as the former of these methods of

* It must be confessed that, the supposing the absence of any necessity for altering the drawing, is rather a strange way of accounting for good colouring. If the early painters did not alter their drawing after they commenced to colour, it only shows that they were more prudent workmen than the later artists who have done so. The early painters generally worked from drawings, or cartoons, and did not commence to put on their colours until they had *finished* their design, according to the best of their judgment: this system would be equally effective with the rudest or the most accomplished design. So sound a practice is not an index of either an indifference to form or of a rude age; on the contrary, if good colouring depends upon this abstaining from all alteration of the once defined forms, it is imperative on the artist thus to previously determine upon his forms, and all subsequent alterations must be set to the account of his own folly, for being a hasty, and inconsiderate, or vacillating designer. — W.

practice would be no longer endurable, there remains now no other method of becoming practised with colours but that which is founded upon fixed design, proper choice of objects, and ability and unalterable precision in the drawing. Under this idea, then, that you are firmly persuaded of the necessity of previously determining all the several forms and situations of the different parts of your composition, and that the several characters, actions, and expressions of your figures are ably and correctly drawn upon the canvas, your next labour will be (and not before) skilfully to apply all those harmonious tints of colour which enrich the surfaces of those objects, and, according to their several natures, and their situations of proximity or distance, complete the appearance of truth and reality.

After a few words about what has been affirmed as to the physical nature of colours, I shall proceed to lay before you the most authorised and surest observations which have fallen in my way upon the materials of colouring and the practice of the best colourists.

People have been, for many ages, in possession of an opinion, that our sensation of different colours depended on the different ways in which light is communicated to us from the several configurations and differences of those corpuscles, and their interstices, which form the surfaces and several modifications of the different bodies, and severally and differently excite and stimulate the nerves employed in our sense of vision, with those peculiar irritations or sensations which we distinguish by the different ideas of colours, both simple and compound. And that great and excellent man, Mr. Boyle, has, both from analogy and experiment, adduced many proofs to show that this opinion appears to be founded on fact.

Our knowledge of the nature of light, of the constituent matter and nature of surfaces, and of the animal organisation, is, at present, perhaps, too bounded to enter more deeply or specifically into this matter.* Happily, it is not necessary to our well-being here, and though our vanity may be mortified, we may, with Malbranche and Berkeley, very well

* On this subject consult Dr. Brewster's Treatise on *Optics*, in Lardner's Cabinet Cyclopædia; Field's *Chromatography*; and Eastlake's Translation of Goethe's *Theory of Colours*.—W.

MAGDALEN COLLEGE LIBRARY

content ourselves with the full and sufficient information of our senses, as well that of vision as every other, respecting the uses or injuries we may derive from the matters around us; although they give us no information respecting the essence and real nature of any thing. For my own part, I feel but little conviction or satisfaction in the splendid theories deduced from prismatic experiment, which have been handed down for some time past with so much confidence; where it is pretended to be demonstrated by this three-sided wedge of glass, that the solar light is not homogeneal, as was formerly supposed, but that it is combined of seven simple differently coloured pencils or rays of different refrangibility.

That colours are produced by the prism is evident; but it is not evident from this, that what they call the specific coloured rays or pencils did previously exist in the light which passed through this triangular medium, and that the aspects and different surfaces of the component parts of the prism itself contribute nothing, and have no other effect in the production of this phenomenon but simply to decompound and separate a certain combination of supposed heterogeneous rays of seven particular colours, of which it is imagined light consists. Such experiments appear to be, if not foreign to the real object of inquiry, yet at least very vague and inconclusive, and to have been made by men but little practised in the progressional affinities or differences of colour. To offer one instance of this; our philosophers have pretended to discover in the rain-bow just seven primitive colours, and they make no mention of any derivative colours in that phenomenon. But if they mean by primitive colours, colours simple and uncompounded of any others, why seven, when there are but three? If they meant only to enumerate the differences, without regarding the actual fact of the procreation of the compounds from the primitives, why more than six? or why not double that number, or even more, if all the intermediates are attended to?

It may be worth remarking, that Milton has, in a few words, described this appearance with a much more accurate and happy propriety:—

——— "And in a cloud, a bow
Conspicuous, with *three* listed colours gay."

And, in another place: —

" His *triple*-coloured bow, whereon to look."

But lest any one should think that our poet had, from defect of sight, overlooked the four other colours, we may quote the testimony of Aristotle, who has, with his usual accuracy, fallen upon the same tripartite division.

It is well known to all painters, that there are no more, and that there can be no more than three simple primitive colours in the rain-bow, because there are no more colours of that character in nature than *yellow*, *red*, and *blue*. All the others in the rain-bow, and every where else, are compounds or derivatives, formed of these three uncompounded primitives, which appear to have no affinity, and to participate in nothing with each other. The red and yellow contribute nothing to the formation of blue; the mixture of blue and red has no tendency to produce yellow; so the yellow and blue will not produce the primitive colour, red, but the compound, green. The most perfect green tint of the rain-bow is that intermediate space, where the blue and yellow meet in equal powers or quantities. The same is true of the purple and orange, which are the intermediate spaces of the blue and red, and of the red and yellow; and (if I may so express myself) all the filaments of participation in this harmonious texture are proportionally either more or less blue or yellow greens, red or blue purples, russet or golden orange, as the one or the other primitive predominates.* Although any of those three colours produce by their mixture an intermediate colour, of a soft and beautiful character, yet a mixture of three together, in equal degrees of power, is productive of nothing but the destruction of all impression of colour, and is like a body which remains immovable when pushed all the different ways by equal forces.

The impression of colour is equally annihilated when the

* Although there are but *three* primitive colours, painters have *nine*. These are — Yellow, Red, Blue, which are primary; Orange, Purple, Green, which are secondary, being compounds of the primaries; Russet, Olive, Citrine, which are tertiary, being compounds of the secondaries. All other gradations of colour are mere *tints* of the above, *dark* or *light*, according as they are mixed with black or white, or according to the proportions in which they are compounded; thus, the variety of *tints* is *infinite*.—W.

three colours are in the highest degree of brightness, by producing *white* or *light*, or when, in their deepest hue, they produce *black* or *total dark;* or when in any of the intermediate states between those extremes of light and darkness (as is the case with the terrestrial colours we use), they, in their mixture, produce nothing but a grey or dirty tint, proportionally lighter or darker, and equally removed from any impression of colour.

Although in the number of the red, blue, and yellow colours with which painters imitate nature, perhaps not one of them is perfect, considered simply; and although our blacks and whites are far short of the force and depth of real light and total darkness, yet experience shows that those materials are, notwithstanding, sufficient to answer all the desirable ends of the most perfect imitation, and that, with the skill and management employed by the great colourists, nature has produced nothing which art cannot successfully rival.

We have many kinds of red, blue, and yellow colours, of different degrees of depth, or brightness of hue; the colours of each class may be made use of to lead each other on through the degrees of chiaroscuro; they may be further assisted when occasion requires it, either by the luminous quality of the colour underneath, or by a mixture with white or black; and each of these methods is to be employed, as it may best answer the purpose of your imitation. Innumerable degrees of chiaroscuro, or light and dark tints, may, by these means, be obtained in any of the different classes of simple colours, or in any of the classes of purple, green, or orange, which are compounded of them.

The difference between the tints obtained by transparency and those by a mixture with white and black is, that the former is more vivid and pure, and the latter more dirty, dull, broken, and greyish, as might be expected, seeing that white and black arise from a participation of all the three. These dirty and broken colours * are, however, of the utmost importance in our art, and occupy the greatest part in all well coloured pictures. They contribute to show off with advantage the virgin tints, both simple and compound, and

* Or rather the *tertiary* colours and their tints. — W.

they are almost infinitely divisible, as well in the diversities of their hue, as in the degrees of their adulteration.

Mixt, as was before observed, in equal quantities, they produce grey: in unequal quantities, they produce a dead, or greyish yellow, or blue, or red, or purple, green, orange, and in all degrees, from the first sullying of the tint down to its annihilation, into a lighter or darker grey.

The endless variety with which this conduct is pursued in nature herself is truly wonderful and entertaining: on the one hand, it affords (and without the perplexity of too much difference) that boundless scope which is so grateful to the mind in all its objects of pursuit; and on the other, it affords the only and true means whereby the tints of pure colour, and their simple compounds, receive a value, spirit, rarity, and importance, of which we could otherwise have had no idea.

That beauty, then, which enchants us in the colouring of natural objects has less connexion with fine colours, or with a multiplicity and variety of them, than is vulgarly imagined. Each particular tint or colour, in itself, is common and ordinary enough; all depends upon the taste and skill with which these tints are variegated and opposed to each other.

To imitate with fidelity, sentiment, and even with its highest splendour and gaiety, all this harmonious arrangement in the colouring of natural objects, there is no necessity that the painter should employ any other than a few simple and ordinary colours; yellow, brown, and red ochres; blue, white, and black, with here and there, perhaps, a tincture of cinnabar, are all that is wanting to a man whose skill and ability knows how to make use of them to advantage.*

With these, and these *only,* Giorgione and Titian have

* This is not literally true, unless a great latitude is given to *brown;* still then the carmines and lakes are excluded. It is well known that the Venetians were abundantly supplied with the finest colours of every description: their great trade with the East rendered the acquisition of them easy. When Philip II. ordered Michel Coexie to copy the famous altar-piece of the Adoration of the Lamb, by the Van Eycks, Coexie complained that he should not be able to procure a blue of sufficient excellence for the drapery of the Virgin; whereupon Philip wrote to Titian for some ultramarine, which he procured; and it was of so costly a kind, that Coexie used for the drapery of the Virgin alone a quantity of the value of thirty-two ducats. Van Mander, *Het Leven der Schilders,* &c. —W.

executed those immortal works, which have been hitherto the standard of beautiful and perfect colouring, and which are as far removed from a meagreness and poverty of tints, as they are from a tawdry meretricious gaiety.

I have often had occasion to lament the great want of repositories of art in this metropolis, which, whilst they afforded the opportunities of inspection and study, absolutely necessary for your advancement, would also be further serviceable in forming the taste of the public. In no part of the art is this vexation more severely experienced than in the want of a standing collection of good pictures.* The public at Paris are in no danger of being misled in their ideas of old and standard art by the exaggerated puffing catalogues, and other frauds of auctioneers, and mercenary picture-dealers, with which, until very lately, it was our misfortune to be annually infested. At Paris no amateur can be deceived in his notion of fine colouring, and of the conduct, style, and manner of Titian. No young artist need be interrupted in his studies whilst he has such frequent and easy access to the legitimate undoubted works of the great artists in the noble and invaluable collections of the Luxembourg, Palais Royal, and Versailles, not to mention others. To a collection like one of these I could wish to refer you for the inspection of Titian's art and management of tints; as the acquisition of this part of our art does, more than any other, absolutely depend on the practical lessons of a skilful master, or the close inspection and investigation of able performances.

However, as some general observations may be, and have been usefully made upon the conduct and practice of colouring, I shall lay such of them before you as may seem likely to be attended with most profit.

Although something might be obtained in point of expedition by painting upon a darkish ground, which approaches near the middle tint of your work, yet it is not the best

* A desideratum now happily supplied by the establishment of the National Gallery, which, notwithstanding the short period of its existence, little more than a quarter of a century, is truly worthy of its name; though it is to be hoped that in future purchases some regard will occasionally be directed to the illustration of the historical progress of painting, and the distinctive varieties of the schools.—W.

method, as it will greatly tend to corrupt and destroy the purity and fidelity of all your lighter tints, particularly if you do not employ a great body of colour in the laying them in; for though we have some colours which are particularly called transparent, in contradistinction to those which are less so, yet all colours participate of transparency in some degree; and when a light colour, though opaque, is thinly spread over a dark one, it is by the colour underneath rendered dim and muddy. Whereas, on the contrary, the dark colour laid over the light one increases its brilliancy. The best mode of practice, then, is that of employing stiff body colour on a white ground, or on one nearly approaching it, as was the custom of Titian, Rubens, Vandyck, and the other good colourists. From this you work down, proceeding darker and darker, and reserving your transparent colours and darkest touches and tints for the last. By this method, if you do not otherwise prevent it, the effects of time upon your work will be rather for its advantage and its greater brilliancy, than the contrary. However far you may be inclined to advance matters in your *bozzo*, or first colouring (and the further you can complete your forms and general effect the better), yet the making out, or rather, if I may be allowed the expression, the carving out with your pencil all the detailed particulars, the joints and other knotty parts of the body, according to the happy characteristic delineations of their several forms and perspective aspects, had better, perhaps, be reserved for the second colouring, or repassing over your work, because you will be then freed from many considerations, and the better enabled to attend to those particulars, and execute them at once. You may afterwards heighten, or give them what depth you please, when you are giving force and transparency to the shadows, and harmony to your general effect; but all the spirit and felicity in the handling of those parts would be greatly and unavoidably impaired by the repetition or twice painting of them. The transparency, force, and beauty of your last colouring will greatly depend upon the clearness of your bozzo, or first colour, which should be in the middle tint, and the shadows rather of a cold, greyish, or pearly hue, more or less, according to the nature of your carnation, as this will be the best basis for the transparencies that are to be obtained in repass-

ing those parts with the warm and more oleaginous colours with which you finish; and it will also prevent the necessity of employing the warm and cold tints at the same time, which by their mixture would produce muddiness and opacity where the contrary is wanting.

Those colours without body, which are more immediately considered as transparent, are to be used with great caution, for though they are necessary to give a richness and depth to the dark colours, by preventing that mealy appearance which results from the light resting and glittering on their surfaces, yet as these transparent pigments carry with them much oil, and but little colour, they in time would necessarily become injurious, should you too indiscreetly employ them in veiling over the lighter tints.

In conformity with that principle of selection which has been pursued through the design, composition, and other parts of the art, we must in the colouring also, not content ourselves with making a mere imitation of such tints and associations of colour as the natural objects may casually exhibit.

Selection and *perfection* are your objects in all things, and not mere casual fact. Every thing is bad, and to be rejected, when better can be found. We have, in the last discourse, had occasion to observe, that the effect of chiaroscuro should be so calculated as to co-operate and give all possible value and advantage to that expression and sentiment, which the subject ought to impress on the mind of the spectator.

The same sensibility, which alone can regulate the proper mode, and degree of light or dark that is happily adapted to the subject, whether of the gay, majestic, or melancholy kind, must also direct and govern your choice in that general tone or hue of colour, which may predominate throughout these lights and darks, without injuring the local and proper tints of colour peculiar to the situation and nature of the several objects.

The whole, and every part of your work, should wear the same character of gaiety or gloom; and nothing can be more aptly calculated to give this last degree of completeness to the sentiment of your work, than the selection of such simple, compound, or broken colours, and such identical tones and degrees of those colours, as tally exactly with the happiest

conceivable expression of your subject. This selection of ideal, poetical completeness in the whole, and in all its parts, is what makes our work an art of the mind, where all the higher faculties of man are employed: and it can never be too often, or too forcibly impressed upon your attention, that this sentimental assemblage of happily co-operating incidents and circumstances lies as much within the sphere of possible nature as any other assemblage, the most ordinary, vulgar, and uninteresting.

Although the quality and degree of this general hue, or first tone of the picture, must necessarily predominate, and hold all the other tones of colour in a graduated subordination, yet this may be done without infringing upon that tendency to an equilibrium which must, in some degree, be preserved between the warm and cold tints of colour, upon which the harmony of your arrangement does much depend; and all these attentions may be very well combined, whether your light be contracted or more diffused, communicated through a hazy or clear medium, of a warmish or a more cold colour, more bright or more gloomy: the characteristic peculiarities of a morning, noon, or evening light, may be easily preserved under any of those circumstances of difference.

Contrariety and difference being no less necessary in the colouring of a picture than affinity and accord, the judicious artist will find numberless resources, of which in either case he may avail himself, without in the least departing from the verity of nature. For example, opposition or agreement will depend upon the association or dissociation of colours with or without those intermediates of compound, half, or broken colour, which soften and still their difference. Besides, as each colour, whether simple or compound, is susceptible of innumerable degrees of illumination and obscurity, strength and weakness; the accord and affinity, or the discord and contrariety of those degrees of their chiaroscuro may be any of them adopted, as occasion shall require.

Further, although light is the cause why we distinguish the colour proper to each object, yet the differences of colour of the several objects will be most apparent, not in the most prominent parts, which receive the greatest degree of light, but in the parts next to them, where the light has but the

second degree of strength. The reason of this is, that the peculiarities of colour are, in some measure, absorbed in the highest degree of illumination, where the light glitters, and has a tendency to produce its own image, as in a mirror, or other smooth surface. The differences of colours are also less distinguishable, and more inclined to accord, in proportion to their immersion in the half tint, and in the shade, in the deepest degree of which they are quite lost.

The harmonical effect of colouring depending upon the judicious arrangement of the accords, and the contrarieties in the several tones and hues of colour; a very slight transition of hue from the colour of one object to another will be sufficient for the extension of your accord, and may be rendered more or less sensible by preserving them in larger or more contracted masses; but massive they must be, or their effect is lost.

The contrariety between the portions or masses of colour may be mellowed, softened, or rendered less striking by the gradual progress of the one into the other, by means of an intermediate or third mass, and it may be rendered more striking and forcible by their direct and immediate opposition; both these methods may be happily employed in different parts of those masses, as the sentiment and effect of the work may require their union, or their precipitate estrangement.

Nothing can contribute more to the beautiful and harmonious effect of your colouring than a careful attention to those varieties of tint and hue which arise from the colour reflected by one object upon another. This communication of reflected colour, which is often mutual, may serve not only to unite and extend your lights, but also to reconcile any differences or antipathies amongst the colours which border on each other. As the direct colour is always more powerful than the reflected, the latter may be occasionally flung with vast benefit into certain parts of the middle tint and shade, where animation and variety may be wanting. Objects and situations the most dull and colourless are occasionally susceptible of this participation.

Thus, it is very apparent that a well coloured picture has many advantages and perfections, which, though all of them strictly natural, are but rarely and partially united by nature

herself. How very important a part these innumerable hues of colour have in the formation of this beautiful assemblage of imitated or natural objects, may be accurately seen on comparing a fine print after Berchem, Wouverman, Watteau, Rubens, or Titian, with the pictures of those fine colourists. Although what is called the colour of a print has been greatly improved and advanced since the time of Vischer and Pontius, yet the phrase is improper and inaccurate, as there is no colour produced in a print. What those meant who first adopted the phrase is, the chiaroscuro, or light and dark, in contradistinction to mere light and shade, which was, for the most part, all that the old engravers attended to. All the tints, or degrees of light and dark, the comparative lightness or darkness of different carnations, or heavier or lighter coloured draperies, or other objects, may be, and indeed are now happily rendered by our engravers, but the variety and difference in the hues of colour certainly cannot.

Mr. Norden, and other travellers, speak in great raptures of the vast works in Upper Egypt, where the ancient artists had united basso-rilievo and colouring in the same performance. These travellers have not told us whether the whole scene or natural appearance of advanced and remote objects was attempted: as it would be of importance to know how far the objects in the second or third plans were either sculptured or painted, or both, and how it fared with the sky and distance of those historical representations; for as such they speak of them. A few specimens of this kind of work might surely be obtained with ease, and would be a great desideratum in the invaluable collection at the British Museum.* Besides the qualification of general curiosity, they would greatly contribute to elucidate the history and progressional improvement of the arts; and it is highly probable that some advantage would also result from the opportunity of inspecting those durable materials of colour, which have triumphed over such an immense tract of time. Certainly some attention is due to the effect those works had upon the feelings of our travellers; and the rapturous admiration they have expressed, ought to incline us to admit that, in a certain degree, the arts of painting and sculpture may

* There are now copies of such works in the Museum. — W.

be agreeably united, notwithstanding that the Greeks, who, according to Pausanias, had also practised something like this in the early times of their art, seem to have rejected it afterwards upon more mature consideration.* For after all reasonable allowance, it is certain that, if in this mixture of the two arts, we should be inclined to attempt the representation of the whole scene, the result must infallibly be lame, defective, and even absurd; since, although the relieved and sculptured part will afford different lights and shades, very sensible in the advanced objects, and proportionably less so in those more retired and of lower relief; and though the colour of those objects may be more or less forcible, so as to correspond with their local situation; yet the hues of colour in the sky and distance must frequently be at jar with the light and shade of the advanced parts. For if, when the light is on the right side of the work, the hues of colour on the sky and distance be accommodated to a morning effect, they cannot afterwards adapt themselves to the noon appearance, and upon a still further change of the luminary to the left side, they will be in direct contradiction to the effect of an evening or setting sun.†

The association, then, of those arts would not answer the end proposed; and we may confidently and safely conclude that painting, as it was practised by the great artists of the three last centuries, is alone adequate to all the occasions of perfect imitation.

The Cartoons of Raphael excepted, which are painted in distemper or size colour, almost all the principal works of painting now remaining have been executed either in fresco or oil.‡ The method of painting in fresco is attended with some difficulties, which do not occur in distemper or oil.

* The Greeks coloured their sculpture and their architecture, even in the best ages. See the note on this subject to Fuseli's Introduction to his Lectures. — W.

† The grounds of the Greek bassi-rilievi were not coloured in imitation of nature, but simply to *separate* the sculptures from their grounds. — W.

‡ Mantegna's Triumph of Julius Cæsar is also in distemper, as are also nearly all the easel pictures yet remaining of the period anterior to the fifteenth century; yet many works, even of that age, both in Italy and in the Netherlands, are executed in distemper, a method which was then practised with great technical perfection. — W.

It affords no opportunity of obtaining depth, transparency, or a mixture of cold and warm hue in the same tint, by covering one colour with another ; and it requires the very great ability of absolutely and unalterably determining the precise hue, strength, or weakness of the several tints in the very moment of laying them on, without a power of any subsequent softening or blending those tints. To obviate, in some measure, the necessity of encountering all those difficulties together, the painters in fresco are not only provided with a cartoon, or large correct drawing, the size of the work, from which they trace as they go on, but they have also a smaller finished performance, either in oil or distemper, where the effects of the chiaroscuro, and the hues of colour, are previously studied and determined. Without these necessary precautions it would be impossible to execute a great work in fresco; and even with them, it requires such spirit, frankness, decision, and graceful easy execution, as can alone result from great intelligence and ability.

There being so little particularly worth remarking in the ancient frescoes* which have been dug out of the ruins of Rome, and in those found in Herculaneum, our attention will be more usefully employed on the more modern productions, where it is in general observable, that the best coloured pictures of the Roman school are those painted in fresco.

The Madonna della Sedia, the Head at the Altoviti†, and a few other portraits in oil, seem to be entirely painted by

* No veritable fresco painting has been yet discovered at Pompeii or Herculaneum; all that have been discovered are in distemper, but the medium used appears to be of a most perfect description, and appears to be very similar to that used by the Italian painters in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, termed *guazzo*. Wax appears to have been an ingredient commonly used by the ancient painters, but it was so prepared that their colours were soluble in water. Encaustic, which was practised by the later Greeks, and during the earlier centuries of our era, appears to have been nothing more than *burning in* with a heater (cauterium) the ordinary wax colours. Some account of the methods of the ancient painters is given in the editor's article on PAINTING in the *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*. Taylor and Walton, 1841. A full account of the methods of the middle and later ages is given in Eastlake's *Materials for a History of Oil Painting*. — W.

† Now at Munich: it is disputed whether this head be the portrait of Raphael, or of his friend Bindo Altoviti. — W.

Raphael himself, and are excellently well coloured, much better than his Santa Marguerita, his Holy Family, St. John, or than a great part of the Transfiguration; the tints of which picture, particularly in all the advanced parts, are greatly corrupted and injured by a sooty, dense colour, which predominates in the shadows, and was probably made use of by Julio Romano, in retouching and finishing the picture after Raphael's death. It is, therefore, in the Dispute of the Sacrament, the School of Athens, the Miracle at Bolsena, the Galatea*, and the other frescoes, that we are enabled to form any equitable judgment of the whole extent of Raphael's science in colouring, such as it was. These pictures have altered nothing in their colouring; the several objects are well coloured, separately considered, and their several hues of colour even make, on the whole, an agreeable assemblage; but what from the want of availing himself of the accord and mellowness brought about by reflexes, and his not being perfectly apprised that there was a chiaroscuro of colours, and of the tints of colour, as well as of mere light and shade, it is certain, that in the colouring part, these immortal works are short of the perfection and of the superiority they possess in almost every other.

The best coloured works of Annibal Carracci are those which he executed at Bologna, in conjunction with his two relations, with Guido, and his other scholars. His hue of colour was then better and warmer than that which he afterwards adopted in the Farnese gallery. But notwithstanding that Carracci's particular objects are, in point of colour, inferior to those of Raphael, yet, with respect to the general effect, and economy of the whole mass of light and dark colours in each subject, the pictures of Carracci have very much the advantage.

But the fresco ceiling of Pietro da Cortona, at the Barbarini palace, is perhaps the best instance which can be given, of all the brilliancy, force, mellowness, variety, and harmonious management of colours, that is any where to be met with in so large a machine in fresco. The middle tints and shadows appear to have all the transparency of oil, without any of those disadvantages which so frequently

* In the Villa Ghigi in Trastevere, afterwards known as the Farnesina. — W.

follow it. It is to be regretted that truth obliges one to say so much of a man who has so greatly contributed to the perversion of the other more important parts of the art, and whose seducing works, if the student is not previously well grounded in the great essentials of design, and expressive sentimental composition, it were certainly much better he should never see.

But to finish the enumeration of the fresco works; Mengs' ceiling at Sant' Eusebio is (if my memory does not fail me) a very respectable specimen of ability and masterly conduct in chiaroscuro and colouring.

Although painting in fresco is never likely to be much in use amongst us, yet it may be for your purpose, who paint in oil, to reflect that, if all those beautiful fresco works were necessarily accomplished at *once* painting, the same, and much more, if it were necessary, can be done in oil by any artist of such ability and skill in drawing as will enable him to decide his forms at once, without fumbling through three or four strata of colour before he can find them. All that *impasto* or embodying of colour, which may be necessary for certain lucid parts, may be given as you go on; and you may afterwards retouch, and give what depths you please; as was the usual practice of Vandyck, not to mention others. His pictures, particularly his portraits, were evidently painted at once, with sometimes a little retouching, and they are not less remarkable for the truth, beauty, freshness of their tints, than for the spirited masterly manner of their handling or execution. I could not offer to your consideration a more apposite and illustrious example of the success of this method of finishing as you go on than the portraits of Vandyck. They are every where to be met with in this country, and you may easily convince yourselves that his lights are sufficiently brilliant, forcible, and well embodied with colour, and betray no want of that *impasto* which furnishes the apology for loading those parts. Indeed, one should think that the very circumstance of painting on a light ground precludes the necessity of any such practice.

But in the painting of history, where you have more command of your time and your model, if you should think it necessary to have a greater degree of *pastosity* or charg-

ing of colour on those parts than can be well managed at *once* painting, the other method I have before mentioned, is directly for your purpose, viz. by making a slight general dead colour of the whole, charging those lights with whatever quantity of colour you wish, and conducting the middle tint and shadows, broad, cool, and indefinite as to their particular and more minute details, all which you leave to be determined with spirit, and precision of form, and transparency of tint, in the second painting. This was the conduct adopted by Titian in those pictures which he painted in what is called his second manner; where the freedom of his execution was emancipated from his solicitous attention to the manner of Giorgione, or rather when he was conscious and satisfied that this inestimable manner was become his own.

According to what is related by Vasari, it was from seeing some works of Da Vinci, that Giorgione adopted that mellow, forcible, deep toned manner of colouring from which he himself, and afterwards Titian, and the whole Venetian school, derived so much glory. Many particulars, which might, if necessary, have corroborated this fact, were, no doubt, easily traceable in the time of Vasari.

But there is in the apartments of Don Paolo Borghese at Rome a half figure of our Saviour, with other figures in the back-ground*, which, were it not for the superior excellence of the characters, expression, and drawing, which evidently mark the hand of Leonardo, might, as to the glow of colouring, and the majestic, deep tones of the figures in the background, very well pass for a picture of Giorgione. There are passages even in Leonardo's Treatise on the Art which directly lead to this manner, and (as the book was occasionally written as matter of reflection occurred) were no doubt penned down at the time when the first ideas of this glorious improvement in the conduct of lights and colours suggested itself.

What makes this matter still more incontrovertible is the force, rilievo, and beautiful mellow colouring which at the very same time Fra. Bartolomeo also adopted from Leonardo da Vinci.

* Christ arguing with the Pharisees, now in the National Gallery. —W.

It is worth remarking, that the further prosecution of this beautiful manner of colouring at Florence ceased after Fra. Bartolomeo; as their artists from that time employed themselves in the study of Michelangelo's manner and style of design, almost to the utter exclusion of every other pursuit. But, at Venice, Da Vinci's happy discovery had better success, as the cultivation of it became more or less the unremitting object of the attention of all their artists, from Giorgione down to Tiepolo and the painters of the present day. As the native writers of the Venetian story of Art have sedulously and ungratefully avoided any mention of their obligation to Leonardo, justice, truth, and my veneration for this great father of modern art, would not suffer me to overlook it on this occasion.

The pictures of Giorgione, being mostly painted for private people, are, at present, unfortunately, no less difficult to be found than those of the latter time of Leonardo. There is, at Venice, but one undoubted, undisputed picture of Giorgione in oil. This picture, which is at the Scuola de' Sartori, is very well preserved: it is composed of half figures of the Madonna and Bambino, San Joseph, Santa Barbara, &c. It is in many parts ill drawn, and, from the subject and disposition of it, affords but little opportunity for those peculiar excellencies which distinguished Giorgione. But, notwithstanding, there is enough to account for the very extraordinary admiration in which he was held. The warm, tender glow which is diffused over his carnations, the breadth, force, and transparency of his shadows — their happy accord with each other, and with the lights and middle tints — and the majestic dusky hues of his secondary lights, are, indeed, of the most exquisite relish, and had left nothing further to be wished for, but the extension of the same intelligent, happy conduct to the larger and more interesting compositions, which soon followed in the works of his disciples and imitators.

The few pictures which remain of Fra. Sebastiano at Venice, are, for rilievo, richness, depth, and majesty of hue, very Giorgionesque, but it is in the most valued and precious works of Titian that we find this style at the highest. His Madonna, St. Sebastian, St. Catherine, &c., at the Frari; his St. Mark, St. Sebastian, &c., at the Salute, and his other

works at this time, afford the fairest exhibition of what Giorgione had done. The style which Titian afterwards adopted from the hurry of practice, and which is not improperly called his own manner, was not of so high a relish for rilievo and hue, though always admirable and full of excellence, and perhaps (certainly in his own opinion) better adapted to concentrate all his views with respect to the execution of extensive historical compositions.

In this class is his famous picture of St. Peter, Martyr; the Annunciation; the admirable picture of the Christ crowned with Thorns, at Milan; the Death of Abel; the Abraham and Isaac; the David and Goliath, and the greatest part of his works.

In his latter times, indeed, he carried this bravura, or masterly execution, to a vicious extreme; yet, to the last, amidst all his dashing and slobbering, there is still remaining some grateful savour of that exquisite order, without which colours can have neither force, reality, nor value. Much as I wished it and sought it, I have never been able to meet with any of those copies which were said to exist of Titian's large composition of the Battle of Cadore, which unfortunately perished in the burning of the Council-hall, a few years after it was painted. The order and management of Titian's tints, in an extensive composition, must then be sought for in his followers, Tintoret and Paul Veronese.

Tintoret is very unequal in his works, and has left behind him a greater number of bad, or, which is nearly the same thing, of middling works, than any other artist of reputation. The effect of his chiaroscuro is often admirable, and it is sometimes equally well-tinted in point of colour. His very spirited masterly picture of the Miracle, at the School of St. Mark*; his Crucifixion, at the School of S. Rocco; the Resurrection, at the Palace, and some other of his works, are excellent examples of sound principles of light and colour, and of vigorous spirited execution. But the same impetuous spirit, to which are owing many of his greatest beauties, has much more frequently precipitated him into excesses, subversive of all intelligence and variety; which must ever be unavoidably the case when it is not accompanied with equal

* The Miracolo dello Schiavo, now in the Academy at Venice. — W.

judgment, and with a reasonable allowance of time for this judgment to exert itself. Either of those is barren or abortive, as to excellence, without the other.

Paul Veronese is an example which I would hold out to you with much more pleasure; for the whole economy and practical conduct of a picture no man is more worthy your attention. His tints of colour, though often not equal in value to those of Titian, are, however, equally true, and necessarily much more variegated, from the great extent of his subjects. He has shown a most exquisite sensibility in according his almost endless variety of broken tints with the portions of pure vivid colour which accompany them; and the harmony resulting from all those variegated masses of colour, together with the light, easy, graceful, spiritual manner in which the whole is conducted, leaves nothing further to be wished for in this part of the art.

In this school, then, is to be found all that can be desired respecting the scientific, necessary conduct to be employed in the colouring of a picture. In colouring, the Venetians were select and ideal, and have proceeded with a finesse and management quite the reverse of the conduct they adopted in the other parts of the art. Whilst those of the other schools of Italy who had availed themselves of the ideal respecting design and composition, have been equally defective in not pursuing the same selection in the chiaroscuro of their colours.

Thus it appears that the admiration, as well as the disrelish, which has followed the several acquisitions and deficiencies of those schools, tend equally to establish the truth of the maxim with which we set out, and which has so often occurred in the past discourses, viz., that the object of art is not the imitation of mere nature, but the imitation of nature happily chosen and completed in all its circumstances, so as to correspond with that possibility and perfection which the mind conceives, and with which only it can be satisfied.

The completing this idea of art by uniting the several perfections of the several schools and great men was the desideratum remaining. The Carracci set out with this noble object in view in the founding of their school, and although they advanced to a very great and respectable length in the completion of it, yet there remains still something, as well in

the altitude and degree of those perfections to be united, as in the very union itself. These great artists seem to have been not a little retarded by the mistake committed at their very outset, in not bestowing their attention upon the colouring of Titian and the Venetians in preference to the works of Correggio, for which they had contracted an early prejudice, and which they had, from their vicinity, more frequent opportunities of inspecting.

Correggio is, no doubt, upon the whole of his character, one of those very few artists of the first class; and, not to mention any other of his admirable works, his picture in the academy at Parma * is, as far as it goes, and for an agreeable union of all the parts of the art, perhaps superior to any other picture in the world. His conduct of the chiaroscuro, as well in the colours as otherwise, is singularly excellent in all his works, but, notwithstanding, his tints of colour are, for variety and value, still short of what is found in Titian. Indeed, the object of Correggio's pursuit seems, like that of the Carracci themselves, to have consisted in uniting all the parts of the art, rather than in the particular cultivation of any one of them.

It is a matter of surprise and astonishment that Rubens, who had so much general knowledge, such vigour of mind, added to an elegant, classical taste; who arrived in Italy in the time of the Carracci; who must have seen their works at Bologna, and even that master-work of art, the Farnese gallery; and who, after what had been done by the different schools, could have no other rational prospect than that of adopting the same idea with the Carracci, in uniting these scattered members of art — it is, I cannot help saying, really astonishing that he was so little impressed by the beautiful, grand, and interesting character of design which Annibal had composed out of the works of Michelangelo, Raphael, and a still further attention to the details of nature, and which was so directly for his purpose, as there was really nothing wanting but to unite it to the colouring and chiaroscuro of the Venetians, of which Rubens had made himself a perfect master. This happily castigated style of design is equally compatible with the best, as well as the worst system

* Saint Jerome. — W.

of chiaroscuro and colouring; and nothing can be more idle and beside the point than those notions to the contrary which have been held by some men, otherwise knowing and ingenious.

The fecundity of Rubens's feeling and capacious mind with this style of design, united to his other important acquisitions, was exactly the conjunction required, and would certainly have placed him at the head of the art; but, in lieu of this, the mode of design which he adopted was (as I have had occasion to show in another place), the creature of a false system, and has, besides the injury done to his own works, sullied and corrupted the greatest part of those of his disciples and followers; nay, more, from the inconsiderate precipitation of shallow critics, it has furnished an imputation of scandal to his country, as if any better and more elevated style of design was incompatible with the nature it produced. However, Rubens did really make a happy use of the time he spent at Venice; and it is but justice to say that the greatest part of his works are in the highest degree of perfection, both as to the chiaroscuro and colouring. Although, in some of his less happy performances it must be confessed that his colouring is sometimes attended with a false splendour, and his reflexes too artificial and overdone, so as to make his objects almost pellucid; and although the harmony which results from the very judicious arrangement of his several masses of colour be very great, yet it appears less agreeable, and of an inferior relish to that which is found in the works of Paul Veronese.

The happy effects of those sure and infallible principles of light and colour which Rubens had so successfully disseminated in the Netherlands, were soon found in every department of art. Landscapes, portraits, drolls, and even the dullest and most uninteresting objects of still life, possess irresistible charms and fascination from the magic of those principles.

Rembrandt, who, it is said, was never at Venice, might, notwithstanding, have seen, without going out of his country, many pictures of the Venetian school. Besides, he was about thirty years younger than Rubens*, whose works

* Rubens was born in 1577, Rembrandt in 1606; Rubens died in 1640, Rembrandt in 1664. — W.

were a general object of study when Rembrandt was forming himself. But, however it be, there is no doubt, for the colouring and chiaroscuro, Rembrandt is one of the most able artists that ever lived. Nothing can exceed the beauty, freshness, and vigour of his tints. They have the same truth, high relish, and sapidity as those of Titian. Indeed, they have the closest resemblance to the hues of Titian when he had Giorgione most in view. There is identically the same attention to the rilievo and force obtained by his strong shadows and low deep tones; and his chiaroscuro, though sometimes too artificial, is yet often (particularly in contracted subjects) productive of the most fascinating effects. It may be worth observing, that no part of Rembrandt's excellence is derived from the loads of colour which he has employed, or from the obtrusive, licentious, slovenly conduct of his pencil, or his *trowel*, which he is said to have used. Whether he was originally led to this affectation by the uncertainty of painting without previous determination, or whether it was the mere affectation of differing from his contemporaries, who were generally solicitous about high finishing, matters not; but the practice ought to be avoided. If it had arisen, as it does in old Bassano, from an attention to the details of his objects, and was no where used but as these details called for it, it might appear the effect of a mastery and freedom which might plead its allowance; but in Rembrandt it is not less disgusting than it is useless, for, although it may be true that the unpleasantness of the manner disappears at the proper distance for seeing the work, yet the effect of the picture at this distance has no advantage over a picture of his cotemporaries, Jordaens or Vandyck, whose tints are equally true and precious with those of Rembrandt, but whose beautiful handling or manner of execution is much more compatible with all the other great concerns of art.

This beautiful handling, or masterly execution, makes a very graceful feature in the works of Titian, Paul Veronese, Guido, and the other great artists, particularly the colourists, and so little has it to do with the unnecessary loading of colour, that the fabric of the very diaper upon which Titian painted his celebrated picture of St. John, is almost traceable, even in those parts where the colour is most charged.

Happily, the works of Vandyck are not scarce in this country, and in them you will find admirable examples of what has been urged respecting the beautiful arrangement of light and colours, united to all the graces of intelligent masterly execution; and his style of design is much more correct and beautiful than that of Rubens.

But perhaps it may be necessary to remind you, that as for the most part the works we possess of this great man consist of portraits, where he was not at liberty to avail himself in any considerable degree of the opposition of shadow (particularly on the flesh), the vigour of his effects was necessarily and judiciously brought about by the mere chiaroscuro, or opposition of the several colours proper to his object, and to the relatives which accompanied it. The observations, therefore, which these works afford upon the lower order of tints, and upon those in shadow and half-lights, will, necessarily, be too contracted to go all the length which your studies may require; as I do not know that we are in possession of any of the few exquisite historical compositions which he painted at his outset in life, before he was much engaged in portraits.

But whether his subjects be extensive or contracted, they exhibit such excellent principles of art; the tints of his carnations have such verity in themselves, and such value, from the hues which are so judiciously associated with them in the draperies and back-ground, and the exquisite execution or conduct of his pencil is so very compatible with the most enlarged and consummate style of design and composition, that I know of no single model upon which your attention might be more properly engaged. Would to Heaven an opportunity was afforded of planting your easels before some of his pictures hanging on these walls! Your gratitude would, I am sure, be sensibly excited by the addition of this advantage to the many others which have been already conferred on us by the bounty of our most gracious Sovereign and Patron. Such a matter is much wanting to complete your education as painters. Let it not be said that we are inattentive to those interests and advantages which students may derive from the works of this great artist; however foreigners may arraign us for suffering his ashes, wherever they have been deposited amongst us, to have been so long

unaccompanied with any little decent token of either affection, gratitude, or hospitality.*

* A just attention to the admirable principles of chiaroscuro and colouring discoverable in the fine works of Titian, Rubens, Rembrandt, and Vandyck, must, more than any thing, lead us to reflect upon the great loss this Academy has sustained by the death of its illustrious president. In this very important part of the art Sir Joshua Reynolds was singularly excellent, and we might call to our recollection many of his works which have been exhibited on these walls, and which may be ranked with the finest examples of colouring and chiaroscuro. For a great part of his life he was continually employed in painting of portraits, undoubtedly because there was no demand in the country for any thing else, as the public taste had been formed to this by the long line of the Hudsons, Highmores, Jervas's, and Knellers who had preceded him, and whose works sufficiently testify from what a wretched state Sir Joshua raised this branch of the art, and how vigorous, graceful, and interesting it became by the masterly way in which he treated it. In many of Titian's portraits the head and hands are mere staring lightish spots, unconnected with either the drapery or back-ground, which are sometimes too dark, and mere obscure nothings; and in Lely, and even in Vandyck, we sometimes meet with the other extreme of too little solidity, too much flickering and washiness. Sir Joshua's object appears to have been to obtain the vigour and solidity of the one, and the bustle and spirit of the other, without the excesses of either; and in by far the greatest part of his portraits he has admirably succeeded. His portrait of Mrs. Siddons is, both for the ideal and executive, the finest picture of the kind, perhaps, in the world — indeed, it is something more than a portrait, and may serve to give an excellent idea of what an enthusiastic mind is apt to conceive of those pictures of confined history, for which Apelles was so celebrated by the ancient writers. But this picture of Mrs. Siddons, or the Tragic Muse, was painted not long since, when much of his attention had been turned to history; and it is highly probable that the picture of Lord Heathfield, the glorious defender of Gibraltar, would have been of equal importance, had it been a whole length; but even as it is, only a bust, there is great animation, and spirit happily adapted to the indications of the tremendous scene around him, and to the admirable circumstance of the key of the fortress firmly grasped in his hands, than which imagination cannot conceive any thing more ingenious and heroically characteristic.

It is perhaps owing to the Academy, and to his situation in it, to the discourses which he biennially made to the pupils upon the great principles of historical art, and the generous ardour of his own mind to realise what he advised, that we are indebted for a few expansive efforts of colouring and chiaroscuro, which would do honour to the first names in the records of art. Nothing can exceed the brilliancy of light, the force, and vigorous effect of his picture of the Infant Hercules strangling the Serpents; it possesses all that we look for, and are accustomed to admire, in Rembrandt, united to beautiful forms, and an elevation of mind, to which Rembrandt had no pretensions. The prophetical agitation of

In the whole of what has been offered, I have, to the best of my power, endeavoured to lead your attention to the most

Tiresias and Juno, enveloped with clouds, hanging over the scene like a black pestilence, can never be too much admired, and are, indeed, truly sublime. It is very much to be regretted that this picture is in the hands of strangers, at a great distance from the lesser works of Sir Joshua, as it would communicate great value and *éclat* to them. What a becoming, graceful ornament it would be in one of the halls of the city of London; but from an unhappy combination of evils, generally attendant upon human affairs (particularly on those which, from their superior importance, are likely to excite much attention), there is, and there always has been, occasion to lament, that almost nine out of ten of those great opportunities of the exertions of art have been little better than thrown away. When a great corporation, or any other great employer, are willing to bestow attention upon art, and expend largely for the gratification of the public taste in this way, there is then done all that can fairly be expected from them; but whether this shall be well or ill directed is very fortuitous; and as Fenelon, and all men of observation tell us, will depend greatly upon such tricks, artifices, and scrambling as must bring it more within the reach of meanness and cunning, from which nothing can be expected, than of that elevation of soul and wisdom that alone could do it honour. The great employer is the greatest, I had almost said the only, loser when he does not fortunately light upon an artist adequate to the undertaking: the labours of ignorance can be the vehicle of nothing creditable with posterity. The good favour of the employers, or the greatness of the undertaking, cannot give such an artist the necessary requisites. Although, then, there is no reasonable ground for blame or censure, yet there is much for regret and concern, as these combinations of artifice on the one side, and mistake on the other, are so often inseparable concomitants in the concerns of art. A very striking instance of this unlucky combination happened not long since in a sister kingdom, where it appears that the viceroy and all the chief personages of the country were so far infatuated, as to throw away their countenance and attention upon a large historical picture painted by an engraver, which was to be a glorious record and commemoration in a great kingdom of a new order of knighthood and of St. Patrick, the patron of both: how such an artist could, in an enlightened age, and in the face of a Royal Academy, muster up the necessary effrontery for such an undertaking, and expect, and really find so much support in it, is a matter of real astonishment.

Nothing could be more fatal, than that the students of the Academy should ever be deluded into the notion that there are any short cuts to be found, by which the ends of art may be obtained, without all that long and previous education and labour that have been heretofore judged so necessary. The rejection of all the drawings for the Academy figure at the last contention for the medal, which never happened before, would incline one to think that some of the students are in too great a hurry, and wish to appear at the end as cheaply as possible. Although this be too much

approved, comprehensive, and complete view of the art: and although it is certain that no artist ever did, or ever can,

the character of the age we live in, yet it ought to be hoped that the students, young men with time before them, would heartily despise it, and learn to think more generously; they, I persuade myself, were led into that precipitation by a late regulation regarding the duration of study, but which has been since done away; to this we shall ascribe it, and not to any want of modesty in the students; they will let no examples of any seeming temporary success prevail with them, to have any reliance on whatever may be obtained by the disingenuous arts of cabal and intrigue. They will remember that,

> "Painful and slow to noble arts we rise,
> And long, long labours wait the glorious prize."

Let it be the happiness of the students that this is the fact, that the acquisition of art requires much time and great labour; this it is that will secure to themselves all that is valuable in their art, free from the invasions of vain people of rank and fortune, who, though they may be inclined to dabble, and may sometimes obtain medals and little distinctions from other societies, yet will never bestow the necessary labour in the previous studies, which only can enable them ultimately to produce what is worthy of the art. Devote yourselves, then, generously to an honourable procedure, with a hearty contempt for all low cunning and short cuts; detest all clubs and occasions of cabal: their prime object is to level every thing, and to give strength to the malignity of ignorance and incapacity, by extensive associations. Go home from the Academy, light your lamps, and exercise yourselves in the creative power of your art, with Homer, with Livy, and all the great characters, ancient and modern, for your companions and counsellors.

These general reflections, which led us from Sir Joshua, have brought us to him again: the lustre of his character cannot but be profitable to you, in whatever way it be considered. His efforts of the historical kind were all made within the compass of a few years before his death. No student in the Academy could have been more eager for improvement than he was for the last twelve years; and the accumulated vigour and value which characterise what he has done within that period, to the very last, could never have been foreseen or expected from what he had done even at the outset of the Academy, and for some years after: it is to be regretted so much of this earnestness should have been suffered to evaporate without securing something more for the public. His mind was full of the idea of advancement and pursuit of the extraordinary and grand of the art; he even in his last discourse seems to speak slightingly of his own pursuits in art, and said, that were he to begin the world again, he would leave all, and imitate the manner of Michelangelo. But nothing would be more unjust than to take this passage too literally; it is the natural language of a mind full of generous heat, making but little account of what it had attained to, and rapidly in progress to something further. But surely, without either alteration or further advancement,

arrive at the perfection of such a standard, any more than at that of the Stoics' *perfect man*, or any other of those ideal

had it been Sir Joshua's fortune to have lived a little longer, and whether commissioned or not, had he contrived to have left in this great city some work, of the same majesty of effect, vigour, harmony, and beauty of colour, the same classical, happy propriety of character and intellectual arrangement as is conspicuous in his Infant Hercules, the business of his reputation had been completed. and his country would have the satisfaction of showing a work that. upon a fair balance of excellence and deficiency on both sides, would not shrink from a comparison with the most esteemed works; and you, young gentlemen, would be thereby possessed of a great advantage in assisting your studies, particularly in the chiaroscuro and colouring, in which he was so singularly excellent, and which are so essentially necessary to the perfection of your art.

We shall long have occasion to remember the literary, I might say classical, talents which form another part of the character of this great man; gracefully, highly ornamental, and most becoming his situation in this Academy. From the congeniality of mind which associated him in friendly habits with all the great literary characters of his time, they followed him into this institution, and we have the honour of showing their names, set like brilliants of the first water, in the ornamental appendages of professors of ancient literature, and other such similar accomplishments associated with the Academy. As to those admirable discourses which he biennially read here, you will, I am sure, have reason to participate with me in the satisfaction of knowing that, together with the edition of them which is now printing, there will be published Observations on the Pictures in Flanders, which Sir Joshua had made during a summer's excursion to that country: how fitted to each other, such a man and such a work! Although the time, at present, will not allow us any further recognition of the many singular merits of this great man, which do so much honour to our institution and to the nation, yet, as above all things we are most interested in the becoming, generous feelings of the heart, it is impossible to withhold myself here from anticipating the exultation with which I shall see the young artists and students coming forward in a body, and, with honest ardour, petitioning that a contribution from them be accepted of, as part of a fund for defraying the expense of a monument for this father and ornament of the Academy: the value of such a contribution would be derived from the endearing, exemplary circumstance of its coming from them, and not from the sum; it would be beginning life well, and be a kind of pledge and surety for the exercise of the same feelings through their remaining career. Half-a-crown from each would be better than ten pounds. Such honest, generous intercourse between master and scholar, the dead and the living, cannot be exercised without satisfaction and improvement to our own hearts. I speak as if there was a monument to be erected to the memory of Sir Joshua Reynolds; but, to my astonishment, I have heard of no such matter as yet. The Academy will surely soon awake and rouse itself. It can never suffer that the engravers alone should do themselves and their

objects of imitation so judiciously recommended by the ancients, yet as the imperfections, deficiencies, or exuberance, which inevitably accompany all human attempts at perfection, appertain to the frailty of the man, and not to the object at which he endeavours, I must insist, let unfairness, cavilling, and peevishness say what they may, that excellence of any kind has never been attained to upon other principles. It is only by thus keeping perfection steadily in view, and endeavouring your utmost to possess it, that you can be enabled to afford just exertion to the talents which have been for this very end committed to your management; and if this exertion does not enable you to take the lead as improvers, it will at least qualify you to keep pace with the expectations and demands of the public in the conservation of what has been already attained to. And although the several peculiarities of temper and information may attach you with a particular predilection to some one of the various possible combinations of the beautiful, the majestic, the pathetic, or any other interesting excellence, yet this feature of originality will, from your ability, and the general sufficiency of your education as artists, receive grace and ornament in all those other more mechanical parts of the art with which it should necessarily be accompanied.

profession honour by erecting a monument to the memory of Woollet; but it ought to be Mr. Strange. If so much is done in the commemoration of small and subordinate excellence, what ought not the Academy to do, in a matter where themselves, the honour of the art, and of the country, are so deeply interested? Originating in the Academy, all the artists and dilettanti of the nation would come forward, and this Royal Institution (which I trust will live for ever), founded in the metropolis of the British empire, would set out in a noble and becoming manner. God forbid, that it should ever appear to our successors, in the next generation, that we, too, have been so devoted to the arts of mean, selfish policy, as to neglect the incumbent duty of transmitting to them an honest, exemplary testimony of our recognition of so much excellence!

THE

LECTURES OF JOHN OPIE.

LECTURE I.

ON DESIGN.

GENTLEMEN,

IF the difficulties of your professor's task have always been at least equal to the honour of his situation, they must surely at present be allowed to preponderate considerably, by his having to come after one to whom all sources of knowledge were open, who, to a mass of well-digested materials, possessed by none but himself, joined an imagination capable of illustrating and enlivening the driest subject, and placing it in the most various and striking points of view, and the force of whose eloquence must have made an indelible impression on all who ever had the pleasure of hearing it.*

Such, indeed, is the magnitude of the undertaking, that, though I have practised long and studied much, I should shrink from it in despair, did I not hope to find you prepared almost to anticipate every advice, eager to catch every hint, and ready to second my endeavours with earnest and unceasing diligence. Aided by such a disposition on your part, I have no doubt that even my feeble powers may do much; but you must always remember that the responsibility for your progress does not lie wholly with me. If you are wanting to yourselves, rule may be multiplied upon rule, and precept upon precept in vain, and all the talents of all the

* Opie here seems to allude to Fuseli, who succeeded Barry in the professorship of painting, but again gave up that office when appointed keeper of the Academy in 1805. Opie succeeded Fuseli in the professorship.—W.

professors that ever lived, far from rendering you any essential service, would only tend to cover you with deeper and more irrecoverable disgrace.

What I have to offer will in general be found to correspond with the opinions of those who have written on the subject before: sometimes, however, I have ventured to leave the beaten track; but I can honestly say, that it has never happened through negligence, caprice, or vanity. Truth, not novelty, has invariably been my object; and, in order more effectually to arrive at this point, I now give notice, that if any gentleman, student, or otherwise, will have the goodness to set down any doubts or objections he may have as to the clearness or soundness of any point I insist on, and communicate them to me, I will next year, if not before, endeavour to satisfy him by a further explanation, or by retracting my opinion if I find it untenable.

The writers on painting seem in general not less solicitous than those on most other arts, of tracing it back to the remotest periods of antiquity; some ascribing it to divine, others to human origin, some giving it an antediluvian birth, whilst others are content to take it up on this side of the Deluge, and warm themselves in settling the pretensions of the Chaldeans, Egyptians, Persians, Indians, and other early nations, to the honour of having been its first parents and protectors.

Having neither leisure nor inclination to enter into disputes which promise to be as endless as unproductive of any thing beneficial either in regard to the theory or practice of the art, I shall confine myself to such observations on its origin as rise naturally from considering its principles, without reference to historical evidence of any kind whatever.

The rudiments of painting appear to me so congenial to the mind of man, that they may almost be said to be born with it. The art is a language that must exist, in some greater or less degree, whenever the human intellect approaches a certain, and that by no means an elevated, standard. Instead, therefore, of asking where it *was*, I should be more inclined to ask where it *was not* invented, as the more difficult question to solve: for on the slightest consideration it cannot but be obvious, that men in the earliest, and every period, *must* (from natural causes) have been impressed with

an idea of the elements of art. The shadows of plants, animals, and other objects on a plain, the prints of feet in the dust or sand, and the accidental resemblance of lines and patches of colour to faces and human figures, must have given rise to the conception, and pointed out the possibility of imitating the appearances of bodies by lines and colours. Thus nations, in which society appears to be scarcely beyond its infancy, possess the first rudiments of design before they are acquainted with those of many other arts more useful, and almost necessary to their existence; their naked bodies are covered with punctures of various forms, into which indelible colours of various kinds are infused, — whether for ornament or use, to delight their friends, or terrify their enemies, is not easy to determine.

After this first step, the next demand for the art would undoubtedly be to communicate and transmit ideas, to preserve the memory of warlike exploits and remarkable events, and to serve the purposes of piety or superstition; it being a much more obvious and natural expedient to form some picturesque representation of a person or action, than to attempt to give an account of them by means of abstract signs and arbitrary characters; and hence, probably, are derived the picture-writing of the Mexicans*, and the more artful hieroglyphics of the Egyptians.

But though the arts of design are among the first that make their appearance after those absolutely necessary to preserve life, they are, perhaps, always the very last that reach perfection: with an almost inextinguishable principle of vitality they yet require the fervid warmth of the acme of civilisation to expand them to their full size, and give them to bear fruit of the highest flavour.

The progress of the arts in every country is the exact and exclusive measure of the progress of refinement: they are reciprocally the cause and effect of each other; and hence we accordingly find that the most enlightened, the most envied, and the most interesting periods in the history of mankind are precisely those in which the arts have been most esteemed, most cultivated, and have reached their

* See Aglio's *Antiquities of Mexico;* a magnificent work, published by Lord Kingsborough, which contains fac-similes of all the most remarkable specimens of this Mexican painting.—W.

highest points of elevation. To this the bright æras of Alexander the Great and Leo X.* owe their strongest, their most amiable, and their most legitimate claims to our respect, admiration, and gratitude; this is their highest and their only undivided honour; and, if not the column itself, it is certainly (to borrow a metaphor from a celebrated orator) the Corinthian capital of their fame.

The principles of painting comprehend those of all the other arts of design, and, indeed, of every thing in which the imagination or the passions are immediately addressed through the organs of sight. In this art (the simplest in its means, and the most powerful in its effect), by the mere application of lines and colours, a flat surface is made to recede or project at the will of the artist; he fills it with the most agreeable appearances of nature, and sets before our eyes the images we hold most dear. The empire of the art extends over all space and time: it brings into view the heroes, sages, and beauties of the earliest periods, the inhabitants of the most distant regions, and fixes and perpetuates the forms of those of the present day; it presents to us the heroic deeds, the remarkable events, and the interesting examples of piety, patriotism, and humanity of all ages; and, according to the nature of the action depicted, it fills us with innocent pleasure, excites our abhorrence of crimes, moves us to pity, or inspires us with elevated sentiments.

Nor are its powers limited by actual or bodily existence; the world of imagination is all its own. It ascends the brightest heaven of invention, and selects and combines at pleasure whatever may suit its purpose. All that poets yet have feigned, or fear conceived, of uncreate or unembodied being, is subject to its grasp; and most truly may it be said to

> . . . . . give to airy nothing
> A local habitation and a name.

Painting, we are told, consisted, in its infancy, of mere outlines, and probably for a long time very little exceeded what we now see scrawled in a nursery by children who have never been taught to draw†: the next step of the art was to

* Or rather, more justly, Julius II. —W.

† See Fuseli's First Lecture.—W.

monogram, or the addition of some parts within the contour; from thence it advanced to the *monochrom*, or paintings of one colour; and to this quickly succeeded the *polychrom*, or the application of various colours, performed by covering the different parts of the picture with different hues, much in the same way as we now colour maps; and beyond this the art has never advanced among nations of the East, even to the present time.*

But in Greece, happy country! all causes were combined in favour of the progress of the art, as if nature was determined to show for once what the human powers, aided by every circumstance, were capable of accomplishing. Painting was there received with enthusiasm, liberally encouraged, and pursued by a succession of the mightiest geniuses the world ever saw, who, with incredible rapidity, completed its elements, by the addition of light and shade, to colour, and of action to form, and of expression to action, and composition to expression, and grace to composition: every delicacy of execution and mechanical skill crowned the whole, and the art, in their hands, became adequate to the representation of all that is grand, beautiful, terrific, or pathetic in nature: nor did they stop here; like our immortal bard,

> "Each change of many-colour'd life they drew,
> Exhausted worlds and then imagin'd new;
> Existence saw them spurn her bounded reign,
> And panting Time toil'd after them in vain."

In short, they not only surpassed all that went before, but have equally baffled every attempt at successful rivalry since. From them all that exists of true beauty, grace, and dignified character in the works of the moderns, not only in painting and sculpture, but in every thing that relates to design, is borrowed. All that is well-proportioned, grand, and striking in our architecture, all that is agreeable in the forms of our utensils and furniture, and all that is tasteful and elegant in the dress of our females, is derived immediately from them; and but for them even beauty in

* This is not exactly correct: the Indians, the Persians, but more especially the Chinese, have made considerable progress in light and shade. This was sufficiently proved by the pictures in the late Chinese Exhibition, Hyde Park Corner.—W.

nature itself would perhaps at this time have been undiscovered, or so far misunderstood, that we might have preferred the artificially crippled form and sickly corpulence of a Chinese, or the rank and vulgar redundance of a Flemish or Dutch female.

Nature, as it presents itself to the eye, consists of form, colour, and light and shadow: exactly answerable to these, the principal branches of painting consist likewise of drawing, colouring, and chiaroscuro; and as the eye can take in at once but a certain portion of nature, the art has another branch to regulate the quantity and disposition of the parts of this portion, called *composition*. These four constitute the practical or physical elements of painting; and their immediate purpose is to produce illusion, deception, or the true bodily effect of things on the organs of sight. And as by the phenomena of form, colour, and light and shade, nature makes us acquainted with all her superior and more interesting qualities, so the corresponding branches of painting, through the medium of invention and expression (the soul of the art), are made the vehicles of our conceptions of sublimity, beauty, grace, mind, passion, and character.

Invention and expression being purely intellectual branches, justly bear in consequence a more elevated rank and degree of estimation; but it must never be forgotten that they cannot exist alone; perfection in them presupposes perfection in the humbler and more mechanic parts, which are the instruments, the language of the art: without these a man is no painter; and however extraordinary, abundant, brilliant, or refined his ideas, they must die with him; at least he can never manifest them to the world by painting.

To know an art thoroughly, we must know its object, which, in regard to painting, is not quite so easy as it appears at first; for though all agree that its purpose is to imitate * *nature*, yet the vast superiority possessed by many works of art over others equally challenging to be considered as true and faithful representations of nature, shows that some limit-

* The *imitation* of nature is scarcely the *object* of art, but rather its *means* of attaining its object; for it is to be hoped that few schools of art would rest satisfied with the accomplishment of a skilful and illusive *imitation* only. The *object* of art is pleasure, instruction, and improvement.—W.

ation and explanation of this very extensive and complicated term is necessary to our forming a correct idea of its meaning in respect to art; without which it will be vain to hold it up as a standard or measure of the various merits of the different works in painting.

The gross vulgarity and meanness of the works of the Dutch; the pert frivolity and bombast of the French; the Gothic, dry, and tasteless barbarism of the old German, as well as the philosophic grandeur of the Roman school, may all be equally defended on the ground of their being strong and faithful representations of nature of some sort or other. In real objects also, the base and the refined, the dross and the metal,—the diamond in its rough pebble state, as well as when polished, set, and presented in its brightest blaze,—the *goitre* of the Alps, as well as the most perfect beauty, are all equally nature; but who ever thought them equally proper subjects for the pencil?

In taking a general view, and comparing the productions of art, they will be found easily divisible into three distinct classes, formed upon three distinct principles or modes of seeing nature, and indicative of three distinct ages, or stages of refinement, in the progress of painting. First, those of which the authors, agreeing with Dryden that "God never made his works for man to mend," and understanding nature as strictly meaning the visible appearances of things (any alteration of which would at least be unnecessary and impertinent, if not profane), have, in consequence, confined themselves to the giving, as far as in them lay, an exact copy or transcript of their originals, as they happened to present themselves, without choice or selection of any kind as to the manner of their being. Secondly, those in which the artists, departing a little from this bigotry in taste, have ventured to reject what they considered as mean and uninteresting in nature, and endeavoured to choose the most perfect models, and render them in the best point of view. The third class would consist of the works of those who, advanced another step in theory, have looked upon nature as meaning the general principles of things rather than the things themselves, who have made the imitation of real objects give way to the imitation of an idea of them in their utmost perfection,

and by whom we find them represented not as they actually are, but as they ought to be.

This last stage of refinement, to which no modern has yet completely arrived, has been called the ideal, the beautiful, or the sublime style of art. It founds its pretensions to superiority on the very superior powers required to excel in it, and on the infinitely greater effect, both as to pleasure and improvement, which it is calculated to produce on the mind of the spectator; and hence the pure, simple, energetic, and consistent principle on which it rests is indubitably to be considered as the true and real interpretation of the term *nature*, always to be kept in view, not only by all who would excel in painting, but by all who wish to attain the highest style in any of the imitative arts.

Many painters and critics, from observing the difficulty of settling the proper meaning of the term nature, have thought fit to substitute *beauty* in its stead, as the immediate object of the great style of art. But beauty being a word to the full as indefinite, if not as complex, as the word nature, we shall not be surprised to find that many painters of no mean abilities have been led into very fatal mistakes from erroneous and inadequate conceptions of its meaning: we shall not be surprised at the *namby-pamby* style of many of the works of Albani; we can hence account for the *manner* and affectation of Guido, who, understanding the term in too confined a sense, thought he was of course to paint, on every occasion, the handsomest woman possible; and taking, accordingly, in *his* opinion, the most beautiful antique statue for his model, he constantly repeated in his works the same face, without variation of expression or character, whatever was the subject, situation, or action, represented: whether a Venus or a Milkmaid, the Assumption of the Virgin, the Death of Cleopatra, or Judith cutting off the Head of Holofernes. This principle has also evidently been the great stumbling-block of the whole French school, to which it owes the larger share of its absurdity and insipidity, its consumptive languor, and its coquettish affectation.*

* This applies rather to the school of Vien, Vincent and David, and their followers, than to the French school itself. The affected antique *manner*, however, which so strongly characterised the French school during the Revolution, has been happily superseded by a very superior

I will not undertake the perilous task of defining the word *beauty;* but I have no hesitation in asserting, that when beauty is said to be the proper end of art, it must not be understood as confining the choice to one set of objects, or as breaking down the boundaries and destroying the natural classes, orders, and divisions of things (which cannot be too carefully kept entire and distinct); but as meaning the perfection of each subject in its kind, in regard to form, colour, and all its other associated and consistent attributes. In this qualified and, I will venture to say, proper acceptation of the word in regard to art, it may be applied to nearly all things most excellent in their different ways. Thus we have various modes of beauty in the statues of the Venus, the Juno, the Niobe, the Antinous, and the Apollo; — and thus we may speak, without exciting a confusion of ideas, of a beautiful peasant, as well as of a beautiful princess, of a beautiful child, or a beautiful old man; of a beautiful cottage, a beautiful church, a beautiful palace, or even of a beautiful ruin.

The discovery or conception of this great and perfect idea of *things*, of nature in its purest and most essential form, unimpaired by disease, unmutilated by accident, and unsophisticated by local habits and temporary fashions, and the exemplification of it in practice, by getting above individual imitation, rising from the species to the genus, and uniting, in every subject, all the perfection of which it is capable in its kind, is the highest and ultimate exertion of human genius. — Hitherto shalt thou go, and no further — every step in every direction from this pole of truth is alike retrograde — for, to generalise beyond the boundaries of character, to compose figures of no specific age, sex, or destination, with no predominant quality or particular end to be answered in their construction, is to violate propriety, destroy interest, and lose the very essence of beauty in contemptible nothingness and insipidity.

Conceptions of beauty or perfection take place involuntarily in the mind, through the medium of that wonderful and powerful principle, the association of ideas: but they will be very far from distinct or correct, unless we also employ much study of the laws of nature, investigate closely her

taste. The present school of France leaves nothing to be desired in the mechanical department of the art. — W.

methods of attaining her purposes, observe accurately her rules of proportion, and how they are varied in every department of character, develope the connexion of mind with matter, trace their reciprocal effects on each other, and learn, in all cases, to distinguish the harmonious, consistent, and energetic, from the absurd, superfluous, and inefficient combinations of parts and principles.

As the most fashionable and approved metaphysicians of the present day seem inclined to deny the existence of general ideas, I shall not contend for the propriety of applying that term to ideas formed on the principles I have been mentioning; but, under whatever denomination they may be classed, it cannot be denied that they are the true and genuine object of the highest style of painting. Poetry, though unlimited in its field of description, and omnipotent as the vehicle of relation and sentiment, is capable of giving but faint sketches of form, colour, and whatsoever else is more immediately addressed to the sight; and the drama, however impassioned and interesting, can only exhibit form and motion as they actually exist: but the utmost conceivable perfection of form, of majesty of character, and of graceful and energetic action, have no physical existence; they are born, bred, and reside in the human imagination only, never to be drawn from thence but by the hand of the consummate artist, working on the sublimest principles of his art. Here it may be necessary to notice that the term *ideal*, like those of nature and beauty, has probably been the source of very great and grievous errors. Instances have occurred of some, who have even been so absurd as to think colouring, chiaroscuro, and all that contributes to illusion in painting, as beneath their attention; who, because they have heard that nature might be improved upon in some particulars, have fondly imagined that their compositions approached the heroic and poetical in proportion as they receded from nature and became muddy, tame, and monotonous in the effect; forgetting that the ideal has reference to the forms, character, choice, and congruity only of things, and not at all to the rendering the appearance of them with truth, vivacity, and energy to the eye; in which art is so far from being capable of excelling nature, that, with her best efforts, she must ever remain at an immeasurable distance behind.

How colouring and effect may and ought to be managed, to enliven form and invigorate sentiment and expression, I can readily comprehend and, I hope, demonstrate; but wherein these different classes of excellence are incompatible with each other I could never conceive: nor will the barren coldness of David, the brick-dust of the learned Poussin, nor even the dryness of Raphael himself, ever lead me to believe that the flesh of heroes is less like flesh than that of other men; or that the surest way to strike the imagination, and interest the feelings, is to fatigue, perplex, and disgust the organ through which the impression is made on the mind.

Let it, therefore, be always understood, that the end of painting, in its highest style, is twofold; first, the giving effect, illusion, or the true appearance of objects to the eye; and, secondly, the combination of this with the ideal, or the conception of them in their utmost perfection, and under such an arrangement as is calculated to make the greatest possible impression on the spectator.

With such purposes in view, consisting of such a multiplicity of parts, and requiring such an uncommon assemblage of powers, mechanical and mental, of hand, of eye, of knowledge, of judgment, of imagination, and of indefatigable perseverance in study and practice to enable a man to perform any one part with tolerable success, it can be no wonder that the art has not as yet, in modern times at least, reached the desired perfection; nor ought we to be surprised to find even the most celebrated masters materially defective in some one or more of its branches, — those who possessed invention having been frequently deficient in execution; those who studied colouring having often neglected drawing; and those who attended to form and character, having been too apt to disregard composition, and the proper management of light and shadow. The whole together, indeed, seems almost too great for the grasp of human powers, unless excited, expanded, and invigorated by such enthusiastic and continued encouragement as that which exclusively marks the bright era of Grecian taste.

Impressed as I am at the present moment with a full conviction of the difficulties attendant on the practice of painting, I cannot but feel it also my duty to caution every one who hears me against entering into it from improper motives,

and with inadequate views of the subject; as they will thereby only run a risk of entailing misery and disgrace on themselves and their connexions during the rest of their lives. Should any student, therefore, happen to be present who has taken up the art on the supposition of finding it an easy and amusing employment — any one who has been sent into the Academy by his friends, on the idea that he may cheaply acquire an honourable and profitable profession — any one who has mistaken a petty kind of imitative, monkey-talent for genius — any one who hopes by it to get rid of what he thinks a more vulgar or disagreeable situation, to escape confinement at the counter or the desk — any one urged merely by vanity or interest, or, in short, impelled by any consideration but a real and unconquerable passion for excellence — let him drop it at once, and avoid these walls, and every thing connected with them, as he would the pestilence; for if he have not this unquenchable liking, in addition to all the requisites above enumerated, he may pine in indigence, or skulk through life as a hackney likeness-taker, a copier, a drawing-master, or pattern-drawer to young ladies, or he may turn picture-cleaner, and help Time to destroy excellencies which he cannot rival — but he must never hope to be, in the proper sense of the word, a painter.

Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leads to excellence, and few there be that find it. True as this undoubtedly is in all cases, in no instance will it be found so applicable as the present; for in no profession will the student have so many difficulties to encounter — in no profession so many sacrifices to make — in no profession will he have to labour so hard, and study so intensely — and in no profession is the reward of his talents so precarious and uncertain, — as is lamentably proved by every day's experience, and by every page of history.

Let me not be told that by such assertions I am raising obstacles and throwing obstructions in the paths of men of genius, for to *such* obstacles act as a stimulus; what quenches others gives them fire; and I am confident a knowledge of the truth will in the end equally benefit the art and the artist. Should any one be discouraged by it, I will say to him, I have rendered you an essential service; you will soon find some other situation better suited to your talents. But to

those who can, undismayed, look all the difficulties in the face; who have made up their minds to conquer; who are ready to sacrifice their time, their ease, their pleasure, their profit, and devote themselves, soul and body, to the art,—in short, who cannot be restrained from the pursuit of it; to those I will say, You alone are *worthy*, you alone are *likely* to succeed; you give the strongest proofs that can be obtained of possessing all the necessary requisites, and there is every probability that you will do honour to your art, your country, and yourselves; for nothing is denied to persevering and well-directed industry.

I wish we could see — I wish we could ever hope to see — the time when all external obstacles to the progress of art were removed; but as to the internal difficulties, however they may fret us, I am afraid we must, and ought to, consider them as our very best friends. They put me in mind of an anecdote of two highwaymen, which, as it is short, I shall take the liberty of introducing: — "Two highwaymen (says a certain author) passing once by a gibbet, one of them, with an ill-boding sign, exclaimed, 'What a fine profession ours would be, if there were no gibbets!' 'O, you blockhead,' says the other, 'how much you are mistaken! — Gibbets are the making of us; for if there had been no gibbets, every one would be a highwayman.'" Just so it is in art: difficulties serve to keep out unqualified and unworthy competitors; if there were no difficulties, every one would be a painter.

Of the several branches or divisions of the art, separately considered, design or drawing is, undoubtedly, the most important; for on drawing, not only form, but action, expression, character, beauty, grace, and greatness chiefly depend. Colour represents nothing, and lights and shadows have no meaning till they are circumscribed by form. Drawing is, therefore, evidently the foundation and first element of the art, without which all the others, ideal or practical, are not merely useless, but nonentities.

Hence it is clear that drawing must have existed before any other branch of painting, and that drawing must still have precedence in the order of acquirement; and hence we can be at no loss to account for the enthusiasm with which it has been spoken of, nor for the zeal with which the study of

it has been enforced by all teachers of the art. "He," says Sir Joshua Reynolds, "that is capable of delineating fine forms, even if he can do nothing more, is a great artist." And Annibale Carracci was wont to say to his scholars, "First make a good outline, and then (whatever you do in the middle) it must be a good picture."

Many more expressions to the same effect, and of equal authority, might be quoted, but we have yet another proof, infinitely superior to the opinion of any individual, however exalted, of the supreme necessity and comprehensive utility of drawing; for in all the various schools and academies that have been instituted, in every place and country in which painting has obtained a local habitation, what has been invariably their object? Has it not been design alone? How little, if any, has been the attention bestowed on other branches of the art. If you ask them, "What is the first requisite in a painter," will they not say, Drawing? "What the second?" Drawing. "What the third?" Drawing. They tell you, indeed, to acquire colouring, chiaroscuro, and composition, *if you can;* but they *insist* on your becoming draughtsmen. After this, to doubt the importance of drawing would be as absurd and arrogant as to doubt whether the institution of academies have in any degree contributed to the advancement of painting.*

Were I to give an opinion on the prevailing practice of academies, I should say, not that too much attention has been bestowed on drawing, but that certainly too little has been paid to other branches of the art. A man who has obtained a considerable proficiency in one part, will not like to become a child in another; he will rather pretend to despise and neglect, than be thought incapable, or take the pains necessary, to conquer it; and therefore it is, that, though the student must necessarily commence with draw-

* This has been, and may be safely doubted. Academies were originally founded, not for the *advancement* but for the *upholding* or *preservation* of painting. The great age of art was that of family tuition, academies were founded in its decline, nor have any artists appeared during the academic ages to be compared with the great names of former times. The great effect of academies has been to elevate the standard of mediocrity, and greatly to multiply the number of artists; a result partly dependent on the too *material* or *technical* nature of an academic education.—W

ing, he should also very soon begin to attempt chiaroscuro, colouring, and composition, and thus carry on the whole together, if he wishes to become a complete artist.

Good drawing, in the most confined acceptation of the term, demands at least two qualities, correctness and spirit; that is, the forms and quantities should be just, and rendered with precision and facility, which, simple as it may appear, not only requires an accurate eye and a skilful hand, — the result of incessant practice, — but *these* must also be accompanied by a clear understanding of the construction and mechanism of the subject attempted, for (as invariable experience proves,) he that is unacquainted with the shapes and structure of the bones and joints which support and govern the animal frame, and knows not how the muscles (the moving powers,) are arranged, fixed, and connected, and their modes of action, can make little or nothing of the continually varying appearance of them through their integuments, and the most successful endeavour at representing them would necessarily include as many blunders, as the translation of a book of science by a person who understood the language only, and was totally ignorant of the subject of it.

We cannot, as I have heard a great man express himself on another occasion, *see at sight*. A tolerably correct understanding of the construction and leading principles of an object, is requisite even to the seeing it properly; and the weight of the obligation on a painter to study anatomy will appear to increase in a tenfold ratio, when we likewise take into the consideration, how seldom it happens that nothing more is required of him than to represent his objects standing still, or lying in a motionless or languid position before him; for if, in such cases, the eye alone be insufficient to enable him to render them correctly, how much more so must it prove, in regard to figures enlivened by sentiment, or agitated by contending passions, and thrown into *sudden*, *animated*, and *momentary* action, in which a living model (if capable of being placed at all) can hold but for an instant, and must quickly sink into quiescent torpidity! Here it is certain, that, if the artist possess not a thorough knowledge of the figure, if he understand not correctly the arrangement and play of all its different parts, their various and mutual dependencies on

each other, and the appearances they must naturally assume in every given position, — if, at the same time, he be not equally familiar with the rules of proportion, ponderation, and the just division and balance of motion in every joint and limb, he will find it impossible to "catch the Cynthia of the minute;" his labour will be vain; his living model, far from proving an useful pattern, will rather tend to lead him astray, and his (under such circumstances) presumptuous attempt at drawing must inevitably be deficient in precision, correctness, energy, and grace.

The uses of anatomical knowledge being so obvious, I shall only remark, in addition, that as it has generally been too much neglected, so it has sometimes also been pursued too far. There are those who have suffered it to usurp the first place, and considered it as the end, instead of the means. Let the student be on his guard against this mistake; for, though by inflating the muscles, ploughing up the interstices between them in every direction, pushing the bones through the skin, or flaying his figures completely, he may *possibly* show himself an able anatomist, he will infallibly prove himself a bad painter. Let him remember that the bones and muscles are always covered by their integuments, and that they are more or less visible, square or round, soft or firm, divided or united into masses, according to the age, sex, occupation, situation, circumstances, and character of the subject, the expression of which with force, precision, and fidelity, is always to be regarded as the principal end of drawing.

The study of anatomy, as I have before hinted, must necessarily be accompanied by that of proportion and symmetry; for what will the most intimate knowledge of the different parts of the human body, and their several functions, avail us, if we are, at the same time, ignorant of their relative lengths, sizes, and thickness in regard to each other and to the whole together, on which, and on the regulation of the precise degrees of meagreness, muscularity, softness, firmness, elasticity, rigidity, refinement or vulgarity, which must equally pervade every part of each figure, all unity, force and discrimination of character immediately depends.

General notions of proportion may undoubtedly be ac-

quired with the greatest certainty and facility by a careful and persevering study of the antique; but they can be matured and completed only by referring to nature, the fountain-head or mine, from whence all those surprising, and since that time incomprehensible, treasures of excellence must have been derived.

In nature, the elements and leading features of the animal economy are few; and the astonishing variety by which it is distinguished appears to consist chiefly in the forms, quantities, and relative proportions of the parts. *Every* class of animals, and every individual of every class, is variously endowed with appropriate degrees of bulk, strength, and elasticity of body, and of energy, sagacity, and comprehension of mind, according to its destination; and every combination of these, or other qualities, is inseparably connected with a particular set of proportions and configuration of parts, at once descriptive of the qualities united, and conducive to the end proposed by their union. Thus the combined qualities, and the combined proportions, are always reciprocally the exponents of each other. Hence, by viewing the form only of an animal, we are enabled to predict its qualities, whether it be strong or subtle, active or slothful, courageous or timid; and hence it also follows, that the true expression of character in painting depends on the proper conformation and adjustment of the parts to the whole and to each other, according to the unalterable and universally established laws of nature.

Of these laws, or latent principles of form, now so little understood, the ancients, by long study and laborious experiment, made themselves completely masters. They saw what particular proportions marked the physical powers; they understood what denoted the moral; they observed how the situation and shape of the head varied with the increase or decrease of intellectual vigour and comprehension, and, by skilfully applying their knowledge to practice, by judiciously exaggerating (in some cases) the peculiar distinctions of man, compared with the inferior classes of animals, by suiting the proportions to the qualities intended to be expressed, and by avoiding the mixture of any thing incongruous or unnecessary, they produced those concentrated, dephlegmated, and *highly rectified* personifications of strength, activity,

beauty majesty, wisdom, and enthusiasm, which astonish and enchant us under the names of the Farnese Hercules, the Venus, the Fighting Gladiator, the Jupiter, and the Apollo.

The works of the ancients can never be studied too much, but they may easily be studied improperly: the prime object which ought always to be kept in view, as the only means by which we can ever hope to rival them, is the rediscovery, in its fullest extent, of the principle on which they were formed, which none of the moderns have yet comprehended, nor probably attempted, scarcely suspecting its existence: the best of them have, in general, contented themselves with selecting some favourite figure, and using it on all occasions, indiscriminately, as a rule of proportion, absurdly forgetting that, if it was exactly proper in any one instance, it must necessarily be more or less improper in all others. Thus, in escaping the meanness and vulgarity of common nature, they confounded all distinction of character, and became incurable mannerists, insipid or extravagant, according to their choice of a model.

Nor is this the only evil to be dreaded and guarded against in the imitation of the antique statues: for though, as Rubens justly observes, we can never consider them too attentively, or study them too closely; though in order to attain perfection in painting it is necessary to understand them, nay, to be so thoroughly possessed of this knowledge that it may diffuse itself everywhere (for in this degenerate age we can produce nothing like them), yet it is no less certain that ignorant painters and beginners, who make no distinction betwixt the figure and the stone, the form and the material of which it is composed, often learn from them somewhat that is stiff, crude, *liney*, and harsh in respect to anatomy; by which, while they take themselves to be good proficients, they do but disgrace nature instead of ennobling her, losing all her warmth and feeling, and giving us marble tinged with various colours in the place of flesh. In sculpture, it must be remembered that, without any fault in the work or the workman, many outlines and shadows appear hard, dense, and opaque, which in nature are softened and harmonised by the colour and transparency of the flesh, skin, and cartilages, and that the lights also are extremely different from the natural, the hardness and polish of the

material giving them a lustre and sharpness, which dazzles the eye, and raises the surface beyond the proper pitch.

The truth of these observations is too obvious to need a comment; but the whole force of them can hardly be felt by those who have not lately had an opportunity of viewing the works of the French school, in which, at present, the mischievous effects of an inordinate rage for copying the antique are too notorious for any thing but the blindest prejudice to overlook or tolerate. It seems, indeed, to be the fate of this school to be ever in extremes. Formerly they were tawdry coxcombs; now they affect to be the plainest Quakers in art: formerly they absurdly endeavoured to invest sculpture in all the rich ornaments of painting; now they are for shearing painting of her own appropriate beams, and reducing her to the hard and dry monotony of sculpture: formerly their figures were obscured by splendid colours, buried under huge masses of gorgeous draperies, flying in all directions, and lost amid columns, arcades, and all kinds of pompous and misplaced magnificence; now they glue their draperies to the figure, paste the hair to the head in all the lumpish opacity of coloured plaster; nail their figures to a hard unbroken ground, and, avoiding everything like effect and picturesque composition, often place them in a tedious row from end to end of the picture, as nearly like an antique bas-relief as possible. In short, it seems to be the principal aim of a French artist to rival Medusa's head, and turn everything into stone; and so far it must be confessed, to their credit, that, however they may have failed to equal the beauties of the antique, they have certainly copied, nay even improved on, its defects with uncommon success.

When I say the defects of the antique, I mean in regard to painting only, for in sculpture I consider them as beauties. The ancients understood exactly what each art could, and what it could not perform, and wisely confined themselves, in the latter art, to the display of elegance and precision of form, just discrimination of character, and forcible expression of passion; but, in painting, I have no doubt that these were combined with many other excellencies:—for to suppose, as the French evidently do, that they followed precisely the same practice, that they did not attempt to give

more lightness, fulness, richness, and freedom to their hair and draperies; that they forbore to avail themselves of the powers of colour, and the artifices of contrast, to give depth, distance, and effect to their compositions, which however impracticable, and therefore absurd, in sculpture, are completely within the province, and form some of the most essential and appropriate beauties of the sister art, — to suppose this, is to suppose them devoid of taste, and totally ignorant of the nature, extent, and powers of the art of painting.

"There is," says Dryden, "no short cut or royal road to the sciences." This remark will equally apply to drawing, which must be acquired by assiduous study and practice, and cannot be bought for money, nor taught by precept merely. I have pointed out some of the leading requisites and difficulties, and shown, in part, the way to eminence; but on your own energies you must at last rely for the attainment of it. I shall therefore finish my observations on this head, by repeating what cannot be too often repeated, too strongly impressed on your minds, nor too firmly fixed in your memory, — that drawing is the only sure and stable foundation of the art, the only step by which you can ascend into the highest seats in the temple of Fame. By other excellencies you may, for a while, charm the senses, but drawing is almost the only weapon by which you can reach the understanding and touch the heart; it is the only instrument by which you can demonstrate elegance and beauty, develope character, and unlock the hidden recesses of passion. All other acquirements derive from it irresistible force and beauty; but unsupported and unassisted by correct, masterly, and scientific drawing, they can at best reach but a second-rate and temporary celebrity: when the tide of taste rises, and the winds of criticism bluster and beat upon it, the showy but ill-founded edifice must quickly be swept away, or swallowed up and forgotten for ever.

These remarks are the more necessary, as it must be confessed that the strength of the English painters never lay so much as it ought in design; and now, perhaps, more than ever, they seem devoted to the charms of colour and effect, and captivated by the mere penmanship of the art, the empty legerdemain of pencil.

But if the English artist runs counter, in this instance, to the established character of his country, and prefers the superficial to the solid attainments in art, has he not many excuses? may it not, in a great measure, be attributed to the general frivolity and meanness of the subjects he is called upon to treat? to the inordinate rage for portrait painting (a more respectable kind of caricature), by which he is condemned for ever to study and copy the wretched defects, and conform to the still more wretched prejudices, of every tasteless and ignorant individual, however in form, features, and mind utterly hostile to all ideas of character, expression, and sentiment? And may it not, in part, be attributed to the necessity he is under of painting always with reference to the Exhibition?* In a crowd, he that talks loudest, not he that talks best, is surest of commanding attention; and in an exhibition, he that does not attract the eye, does nothing. But, however plausible these excuses, it becomes the true painter to consider, that they will avail nothing before the tribunal of the world and posterity. Keeping the true end of art in view, he must rise superior to the prejudices, disregard the applause, and contemn the censure of corrupt and incompetent judges; far from aiming at being fashionable, it must be his object to reform, and not to flatter, — to teach, and not to please, — if he aspires, like Zeuxis†, to paint for eternity.

* An infinitely greater mischief to art than the innocent "rage for portrait painting," whether inordinate or not. Both Opie and Barry appear to have encouraged an inconsiderate antipathy to this useful and agreeable department of painting. Portraiture itself cannot possibly operate injuriously on art; it is the painter's best school, if he would but pay more attention to the *individuality* of his subject, and put some restraint upon the too common propensity for sacrificing individual *character* to certain conventional notions of *effect*. It is owing to this *subjective* treatment of portraits that they become "caricatures:" if more *objectively* treated they would not only be more *instructive* to the painter, but better *pictures*, and better ministers to the *affections* to which they owe their existence. Who can blame a man for preferring the picture of a parent, his wife, or child, to the vague design of some fanciful painter, of which he can probably neither comprehend the subject, nor admire the treatment! to say nothing of the relative expense of the works.—W.

† See Fuseli's First Lecture, where this allusion is explained.—W.

In taking a retrospective view of the progress of the art in modern times, it will be seen that the two first schools, both in rank and time, made Design, and its dependent excellencies, their chief objects of study; which was no more than might have been expected, as Design (I have already shown) must necessarily be attended to, in some degree, antecedently to any other branch of the art. But the artists of these schools had another, and a much more powerful, motive to urge them to the almost exclusive cultivation of this principal root and stem of painting: they had the exquisite remains of ancient sculpture to contemplate; these began from a very early period to attract general admiration; from these the first germs of correct taste were scattered among the people of Italy; by these their artists had their eyes first opened, and their minds first impregnated with ideas of true beauty; by these they first acquired elevated and just conceptions of nature, and were taught to look beyond the imitation of individual models for perfection of form, for graceful action, and for purity and grandeur of character.

But though both these schools made Design a primary object, they differed essentially in regard to style, and in the manner of its application. Severity, energy and loftiness bordering on extravagance, characterise the principal works of the Florentines. Their style of design approaches the gigantic; it abounds with abrupt transitions and violent contrasts, and affects an expression of strength and fierceness, by which grace is but too often excluded and propriety violated. Taught by the ancients to soar above common nature, they often mistook what was only uncommon and far-fetched for the great and the extraordinary, and failed to interest, from too ardent a desire to surprise.

To their credit, however, it must be remembered, that modern painting owes them infinite obligation; they first burst the trammels of dryness, meagreness, hardness, and servile imitation; first introduced the free, bold, and flowing outline; gave the first examples of dignified character, energetic action, and concentrated expression; invented chiaroscuro and grouping; and often imparted to their works a majesty unrivalled by any subsequent productions of art. On the whole, satisfied with commanding admiration, the

Tuscan artists may be said to have considered the task of pleasing as beneath their notice.

The school of Florence, independent of its merits, has an indisputable title to the veneration of all lovers of the arts, as the first in Italy which cultivated them. Painting, which had languished and become nearly extinct with the Roman empire, was revived by Giovanni Cimabue*, born of a noble family at Florence, about the year 1240. His works, as may easily be imagined, were in a very ordinary, not to say, wretched style; but if they had not excited the admiration, and received the applause, of his countrymen, Florence, in all probability, would never have been honoured with such a painter as Michelangelo Buonarroti.

It would be as tedious as useless to recount the stammering and babbling of the art in its infant state. I shall, therefore, pass on to about 150 years after the death of Cimabue, when the drawing of an enlarged and liberal style of design began to appear at Florence; when Massaccio, whose works are still in existence, produced figures which Raphael, in the zenith of his reputation, did not disdain to transplant into some of his most celebrated compositions; when the intricacies and difficulties of fore-shortening began in some measure to be understood and subdued; when colouring and composition were attempted by Andrea Verocchio, Andrea Mantegna, and Luca Signorelli of Cortona; and when, in short, all circumstances seemed to concur to usher in, with becoming splendour, Leonardo da Vinci, one of the first luminaries of modern art, and one of the most extraordinary of men.

If it be true that "one science only will one genius fit," what shall we say to the man, who, master of all mental and all bodily perfections, equally excelled in painting, poetry, sculpture, architecture, chemistry, anatomy, mathematics, and philosophy; who renders credible all that has been related of the admirable Crichton, who attempted everything and succeeded in every attempt; who, sailing round the

* This is an opinion which at one time was very general, but advanced experience in the history of art has shown it to be erroneous: painting was never extinct, and its revival was very gradual. The student will find this subject treated at some length in the editor's *Epochs of Painting*, already referred to.—W.

world of art and science, touched at every port, and brought home something of value from each?

This was the glory of Leonardo, and this was also his weakness; for, equally in love with grandeur and littleness, beauty and deformity, character and caricature, he bestowed his attention on them all by turns, and soared or dived, as the caprice of the moment directed. His genius, however, gave the death-blow to flatness and insipidity, by the invention of that deep tone of colour, strength of shadow, and bold rilievo, which, afterwards carried to perfection, enchants us in the dreams of Correggio, and electrifies us in the mysterious visions of Rembrandt.

Less profoundly learned in design, less lofty and comprehensive in conception, than his great rival and contemporary Michelangelo, his celebrated cartoon of the Horsemen contending for a Standard is, nevertheless, one of the noblest inventions in the whole circle of modern art*; it evinces a singular boldness and fertility of imagination, by the display of every attitude of the human body on horseback, in the various actions of striking, pulling, thrusting, warding and evading a blow, combined with a felicity and energy at once picturesque, interesting, and surprising: the whole is animated, every part is in motion, and we witness, by turns, the collected coolness of true courage, the devouring malevolence of rage, the contending emotions of hope and fear, the exultation of assured victory, and the despairing gasp of inevitable death. The horses, conceived with the fire of a true poet, and executed with the science of an anatomist, rear and plunge into the battle with a fury equal to that of their riders: in short, this composition was altogether unexampled at the time, and unrivalled for ages after, till it suggested to Rubens the first hint for those magnificent groups of horses and figures, in his battles of the Amazons, and of Constantine and Maxentius; and for those astonishing masses of men and animals in commotion, his huntings of the lion, the tiger, the crocodile and the hippopotamus.

There is no possibility of calculating what such a man as Leonardo da Vinci may have lost by his versatility and want of perseverance. With such comprehension, and such invention, he might, doubtless, instead of furnishing hints, and

* See note to Barry's Third Lecture.—W.

pointing out the promised land to others, have taken possession of it himself, and carried the principles of chiaroscuro and grouping to perfection. As it is, his works are, comparatively, of little value, the greater part of them (the celebrated *Last Supper* at Milan included) having been left in an imperfect state.

Of numerous volumes written by him on arts and science, *one only, a treatise on painting*, is at present in circulation; and by this alone, were there *no other* proofs, might the extraordinary extent of his capacity, and the eagerness of his research, be justly estimated; for though confused and unconnected, in some parts obscure, and in others trifling, it is, nevertheless, one of the best elementary works on the art extant.

Whatever escaped the sagacity, or lay beyond the powers of Leonardo da Vinci, was accomplished by his mighty competitor Michelangelo Buonarroti, the glory of the Florentine school; who elevated design to a pitch of excellence, from which it has ever since been declining. The genius of this great man operated an entire change of principle in modern art, to the little and meagre he gave grandeur and amplitude; to the confused and uninteresting he gave simplicity and effect; and on the feeble and unmeaning he stamped energy and character. Raphael, his greatest contemporary and rival, thanked God for having been born in an age which boasted of such a man; and Reynolds, the greatest painter and critic of our times, prides himself on the capability of feeling his excellence, and declares, that the slightest of his perfections ought to confer glory and distinction enough to satisfy an ambitious man.

Michelangelo, as we are informed by Ascanio Condivi *, having observed the great deficiency of Albert Durer's rules for drawing, resolved to write a complete treatise on the anatomy and proportions of the human figure, and to compose a theory founded on the knowledge and experience acquired by his long practice, for the benefit of all *future artists*.

That this resolution was never carried into effect must ever be regretted, as an incalculable and irreparable loss to

* In the *Vita di Michelangelo Buonarroti*. Rome 1553, and Florence 1746.—W.

the arts; for certainly never man, before or since (at least in modern times), was so perfectly qualified for the task. Anatomy, it is true, has, in a medical and physiological point of view, been subsequently much advanced; but the writers on the subject have, in general, been little able or solicitous to speak of the human figure in regard to proportion, beauty, character, action, and attitude, — branches of the science the most interesting to an artist, the most difficult to investigate, and which, we may naturally conclude, would have occupied the larger share of a work composed by a professed painter.

Destitute of the assistance of this intended treatise, the knowledge of his principles can now be gleaned only by the accurate observation and diligent comparison of his works with those of others; for, in this particular, the accounts of his life, though copious enough in some respects, can help us but little. One circumstance, however, we learn from them, which I would wish to press forcibly on the attention of *all* my hearers, that he was indefatigable in his practice, and in the study both of nature and the works of the ancients, and that this was continued through his whole life, even to extreme old age; the poorest of men, as he observed of himself, did not labour from necessity more than he did from choice; indeed, from all that is related of him, he appears not to have had the smallest conception that his art was to be acquired by any other means than incessant and unwearied diligence, though, as Sir Joshua Reynolds justly remarks, he, of all men that ever lived, might have advanced the strongest pretensions to the efficacy of genius and inspiration. Let no one, therefore, overlook this salutary lesson, let no one henceforward presume to grudge his pains, or think the art of cheap and easy acquirement! I cannot quite agree with our revered and excellent painter, that nothing but labour is necessary to attain perfection; but of this I am quite certain, that, without labour, all other requisites will be vain and fruitless.

The principal work of Michelangelo, in our art, consists of a series of pictures painted on the ceiling and part of the walls of the Pope's chapel, commonly called the Cappella Sistina. The subjects (taken from the sacred records), beginning with the Creation, and ending with the Last Judgment, seem to have been chosen for the purpose of exhibiting

the history of man, as he stands in relation to the Creator, and of showing his origin, progress, and the final dispensations of Providence respecting him.* Of the magnificence of this plan, as you have lately heard it explained with unparalleled ingenuity and inimitable eloquence, in a way, in short, that sets the commentator on a level with his author†, I shall say nothing, but shall confine my observations to the peculiar style which distinguishes the works in general, and *this* in particular, of Michelangelo.

In the first place, it is obvious that he avoids, on all occasions, a multiplicity of objects, and a multiplicity of parts. He knew, as a great critic has judiciously remarked, that, in poetry and painting, many little things do not make a great one; and he has, therefore, rejected all unnecessary subdivisions and unessential particularities: hence the bold swell and flow of his line, uninterrupted by useless breaks and petty inflections; hence the unencumbered breadth of his surfaces, on which the eye rests unfatigued and unperplexed by impertinent differences and trivial distinctions; and hence the fewness and largeness of the parts, both in respect to his figures and his compositions, at once so simple and so impressive.

The same method obtains with him in the intellectual as in the practical parts of the art. In his manner of conceiving his subject, and telling his story, he equally avoids all petty and commonplace details of circumstances, ingenious artifices, unimportant shades of character, and merely curious varieties of expression, which arrest and distract the attention of

* The Cappella Sistina or Sistine Chapel, forms part of the same pile of buildings which contains the Stanze of Raphael, and was built by Baccio Pintelli for Sixtus IV., whence its name of Sistine. The frescoes of Michelangelo are on the vault and on the altar-wall — the Creation of Man, his fall, and the early history of the world with reference to man's final redemption and salvation, with the figures of the prophets and sibyls, on the vault; and the Last Judgment on the wall. Michelangelo had intended to paint the Fall of Lucifer on the opposite wall to the Judgment; but though some of the designs were made, the work was never commenced. The ceiling was painted in 1509—12, and the Judgment in 1533—41. There is an outline of the ceiling in the Translation of Kugler's *Handbook of Painting*, Italy.—W.

† Opie here appears to refer to Fuseli's Third Lecture; not that it contains passages which justify so great a compliment.— W.

the spectator, and weaken the force of the general effect: *essence*, not individuality; *sentiment*, not incident; *man*, not men, are his objects; and, like the Satan and Death of Milton, he meditates no second stroke, but hastens, by one sure blow, to effect his purpose.

As his profound knowledge of the human figure taught him what to reject, so it likewise taught and enabled him to mark the essential forms with unexampled force and precision: possessed himself, he instantly possesses the spectator with the complete idea of his object. As in the drawing of his figures there is more knowledge and precision, so in their actions and attitudes there is more vigour and unity than is seen in those of any other modern painter. By this is meant that the situation and turn of every limb is more correspondent with the whole, is more perfectly informed with the same mind, and more exactly bears its part in the general feeling; and hence it is that, though Raphael often exceeds him in the variety of his characters, the particular expressions of passion, and what may be called the dramatic effect of his pictures, yet, in giving the appearance of thought, capacity, and dignity, he is altogether unrivalled and unapproached.

This perfect unity or concurrence of every feature, joint, and limb in the same feeling, united to the breadth and boldness of his style of drawing, is what constitutes the intellectual energy of his figures, and gives them that air of inspiration, and of belonging to a higher species of beings, which Sir Joshua Reynolds notices with such admiration. Rapt and absorbed themselves, they instantly communicate the same sensations to the beholder, who, awe-struck whilst he gazes on them, dares not think them on a level and of the same rank with himself.

Such is his figure of the Creator, borne aloft on clouds, dividing light from darkness. Such when, descending on attendant spirits, he imparts the electric spark of vitality and immortality to the newly-formed Adam, or, with a word, calls forth the adoring Eve from the side of her sleeping mate. Such are the majestic forms of the prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Zechariah, and Joel. And such, though wild and haggard, the female form of the Cumæan Sibyl, and many others, if not all, of that sublime and inimitable circle: all of them, more or less, in louder or lower tones, proclaim

"the imagination that conceived, and the hand that formed us, were divine."

These are some of the principal features of the style of Michelangelo; a style in which knowlege, energy, and simplicity bear equal parts; which unravels perplexity, gives the appearance of ease to difficulty, and imparts dignity and sentiment to every object it embraces. Though the sublime in painting and poetry so overpowers, and takes such absolute possession of the whole mind, that, whilst the work is before us, no room is left for the ungracious and ungrateful task of criticism, yet, in cooler moments, it cannot, it must not be denied, that Michelangelo had derelictions and deficiencies too great to be overlooked, and too dangerous to be excused; that he was sometimes capricious and extravagant in his inventions, and generally too ostentatious of his anatomical knowledge; that he wanted the vigorous tone of colour and force of chiaroscuro necessary to complete the effect of his design; and that, from aiming always to be great, he often violated propriety, neglected the proper discrimination of character, and not seldom pushed it into monotony and bombast.

I know it has been pleaded, in mitigation, that great painters, like great poets,

> "sometimes gloriously offend,
> And rise to faults true critics dare not mend;"

that his errors flowed from the same source as his beauties; were often such as none but himself was ever capable of committing, and such as could never have occurred to a mean or vulgar mind. But I hold it not safe to admit of apologies of this nature, and more particularly in the present case; for errors are errors, from whatever source they spring, and are never so likely to be pernicious as when associated with splendid and overpowering excellence.

It being the nature even of the faults of Michelangelo to confer a kind, though a false kind, of dignity, too much caution and circumspection cannot be used in the study of his works. The ill success of his immediate and exclusive imitators proves that it is not safe for every man to attempt to draw the bow of Ulysses, or wield the club of Hercules. Let not the student hope, by distorting the limbs, exaggerating

the action of the muscles, or by purloining here and there a figure from his compositions, to become an imitator, though he may become a *caricaturist*, of Michelangelo; but let him first make himself master of his science and principles; let him carefully separate his errors from his excellence, and then, if he possess his boundless imagination, he will probably succeed better than Vasari, Bronzino, Hemskirk, Coxis, Goltzius, Sprangher, and a herd of others, who mistook bombast for grandeur, distortion for grace, and phrenzied convulsion for energy. . . . Superficial and clumsy mannerists! the style of Michelangelo to them was only the lion's skin on the ass's back, which, instead of rendering him terrible, only exposed him to blows, ridicule, and contempt.

Such was not Raffaello Sanzio, the founder of the Roman school, the master of passion — the painter of human nature.

The genius of Raphael was not of that phosphoric kind that blazes out of itself without foreign help. His manner, at the commencement of his career, was dry, minute, and hard to excess; precisely like that of his master, Pietro Perugino, in whose footsteps he appeared, for a time, to be going on, without a conception of his own powers, or those of the art, and without imbibing a ray of inspiration from the miraculous remains of the ancients, by which he was surrounded, or transferring an atom of their grandeur of style into his own works.* A visit to Florence, however, soon enabled him to leave his master at a humble distance. Seizing every opportunity of improvement, as he rolled on, he increased every moment in size and splendour: he mended his style of design, improved his colouring, and acquired composition. But it was not till after he had been clandestinely introduced to the sight of Michelangelo's works in the Capella Sistina, that he completely freed himself from the defects of his first manner. Astonished by those gigantic forms, which seemed to look down with contempt on his littleness, and to say, with a warning voice, "Go thou and do

* Raphael was not surrounded by "the remains of the ancients" *before* his visit to Florence, and, indeed, not before his visit to Rome, in 1508. And the works which he executed immediately after that time, not excepting the *Dispute*, abound in beauties of composition and design, and are strongly characterised by the grandeur of style which distinguishes his most important works.—W.

likewise," he instantly went home, as we are told by Vasari, and, obliterating entirely the work he was then employed on, he re-designed and re-painted the whole, in a style of greatness unknown to any of his former productions.*

Of these figures, a Prophet and Sibyls †, which he endeavoured to conceive in the grand *gusto*, it is, nevertheless, remarkable that, in wanting the science and precision, they also fail in a great degree of the sublime and energetic character of those in the Sistine Chapel. The correct judgment of Raphael soon advised him of this defect; and, conscious of his worth, as well as of his weakness, he no longer laboured to become another Michelangelo, but studied him properly in conjunction with nature and the works of the ancients, taking as much of each as best corresponded with his own powers. Henceforward, therefore, his style of design became original and truly his own; not the vehicle of those awe-creating and terrific energies, conceived only by Michelangelo, nor of the more exquisite beauty and elevated refinement of the antique, but the medium of natural forms, well chosen, indeed, and united to an invention, expression, grace, and propriety such as, in an equal degree, never before or since fell to the lot of one man.

But, however great and various his powers, his peculiar strength, that in which he has never yet been rivalled, and never can be surpassed, was EXPRESSION. To this all his efforts tended; for this he invented, drew, and composed, and exhausted nature in the choice of subjects to display it: every effect of mind on matter, every affection of the human soul, as exhibited in the countenance, from the gentlest emotion to the utmost fury and whirlwind of contending passions, from the demoniac phrensy of the possessed boy in the Transfiguration to the melting rapture of the Virgin Mother

* This is a fable, though its origin may have some foundation as regards Raphael's aggrandisement of style; the work, however, which Vasari alludes to — the prophet Isaiah, in Sant' Agostino — was painted about 1512; it is one of Raphael's inferior productions, and is quite unworthy of mention when compared with the Heliodorus, probably painted before it. See the *notes*, referring to this subject, to Barry's third lecture. — W.

† The Sibyls of the Chiesa della Pace were not painted until 1514, two years after the opening of the Cappella Sistina, and almost an equal time from the completion of all the greatest frescoes of the *Stanze*, which were completed during the pontificate of Julius II. — W.

contemplating her divine offspring, may be found so faithfully and energetically represented on his canvas, that we not only see, but feel, and are, by irresistible sympathy, made partakers of his well-imaged joys and sorrows. By this he attracts every eye, warms every heart, and sways it to the mood of what he likes or loathes. This is what has made him, if not the greatest, certainly the most interesting and the most universally admired of all modern painters, and rendered his name, in the general mouth, synonymous with perfection.

The history of no man's life affords a more encouraging and instructive example than that of Raphael. The path by which he ascended to eminence is open, and the steps visible to all. He began with apparently no very uncommon fund of ability, but, sensible of his deficiencies, he lost no opportunity of repairing them. He studied all the artists of his own and the preceding times, he penetrated all their mysteries, mastered all their principles, and grafted all their separate excellencies on his own stock. His genius, like fire, embraced and gathered strength from every object with which it came in contact, and at last burst forth in a flame, to warm, enlighten, and astonish mankind.

Both Michelangelo and Raphael, great as they were in design, fell extremely short of the ancients: Michelangelo in variety, delicacy, and discrimination; and Raphael in elevation, refinement, and precision. The first undoubtedly stands highest, but the last is probably the more eligible and safe model for *imitation*. Grace and propriety attend him in every step of his progress; his excellencies are both more numerous and more within the scope of general comprehension. He saw in nature what every body sees, but nobody ever before so well expressed; and no one, till he is convinced by experience to the contrary, doubts that he should have done precisely like Raphael. On the contrary, Michelangelo saw nature through a medium of his own, which took away its littleness, gave it energy and amplitude, and rendered it more mysterious and imposing. The mere imitator of Raphael, therefore, is likely to escape censure, though he may possibly deserve little praise; whilst the imitator of Michelangelo risks every thing at once. He must succeed or fail altogether—he must be great or contemptible.

Lecture II. — On Invention.

Of all the parts of painting, practical or intellectual, the first in importance, by the universal acknowledgment of all ages and nations, the quality of all others the most rare, the most beneficial, and that which bears the most unequivocal marks of its divine origin, is undoubtedly Invention. Its possessors are, therefore, justly considered as aspiring to the highest honours of genius, and entitled to be regarded as the Newtons, the Columbuses, and the Alexanders of painting, who have discovered new principles, increased the possessions, and extended the dominions of art.

Unfortunately, this most inestimable quality, in which genius is thought more particularly to consist, is, of all human faculties, the least subject to reason or rule, being derived from heaven alone according to some, attributed by others to organisation, by a third class to industry, by a fourth to circumstances, by a fifth to the influence of the stars, and, in the general opinion, the gift of nature only. But though few teach us how to improve it, and still fewer how to obtain it, all agree that nothing can be done without it. Destitute of invention, a poet is but a plagiary, and a painter but a copier of others.

But however true it may be that invention cannot be reduced to rule and taught by regular process, it must necessarily, like every other effect, have an adequate cause. It cannot be by chance that excellence is produced with certainty and constancy; and, however remote and obscure its origin, thus much is certain, that observation must precede invention, and a mass of materials must be collected before we can combine them. He, therefore, who wishes to be a painter or a poet, must, like Imlac, enlarge his sphere of attention, keep his fancy ever on the wing, and *overlook no kind of knowledge*. He must range deserts and mountains for images, picture upon his mind every tree of the forest and flower of the valley, observe the crags of the rock and the pinnacles of the palace, follow the windings of the rivulet, and watch the changes of the clouds; in short, all nature,

savage or civilised, animate or inanimate, the plants of the garden, the animals of the wood, the minerals of the earth, and the meteors of the sky, must *undergo his examination.* To a painter or poet nothing can be useless: whatever is great, whatever is beautiful, whatever is interesting, and whatever is dreadful, must be familiar to his imagination, and concur to store his mind with an inexhaustible variety of ideas, ready for association, on every possible occasion, to embellish sentiment, and give effect to truth. It is, moreover, absolutely requisite that *man, the epitome of all,* his principal subject and his judge, should become a particular object of his investigation. He must be acquainted with all that is characteristic and beautiful, both in regard to his mental and bodily endowments, must study their analogies, and learn how far moral and physical excellence are connected and dependent one on the other. He must, further, observe the power of the passions in all their combinations, and trace their changes, as modified by constitution, or by the accidental influences of climate or custom, from the sprightliness of infancy to the despondence of decrepitude. He must be familiar with all the modes of life, and, above all, endeavour to discriminate the essential from the accidental, to divest himself of the prejudices of his own age and country, and, disregarding temporary fashions and local taste, learn to see nature and beauty in the abstract, and rise to general and transcendental truth, which will always be the same.

Nor is his labour yet at an end. To the *study* of nature he must also join that of art, and enrich his mind by the contemplation of all the treasures produced by it in ancient and modern times, tracing its progress from its rudest infancy to its ultimate perfection; not contenting himself with a superficial survey, but studying attentively the peculiar manner of each master, dwelling on all their successful efforts, scrutinising all their defects, observing all their beautiful thoughts; inquiring whence they were derived, with what connected, and how far founded in nature; entering into all the artifices of their compositions, and comparing their different modes of execution and arrangement, till he penetrates and developes the principles on which their most splendid effects are produced.

Thus impregnated and warmed by the contemplation of high excellence, our bosoms expand, we learn to see with other eyes than our own, and our minds, accustomed to the conceptions of the noblest and brightest intellects, are prepared, by degrees, to follow them in their loftiest flights, and rival them in their most vigorous exertions.

Here it will perhaps be remarked, that the greatest pains are often fruitless, and that we are not seldom called upon to admire the productions of native powers, unaided, unforced, unblest, or unperverted by any kind of culture or foreign assistance whatever; whence it is inferred by many, that genius is no more than a sort of instinct, by which its happy possessors are led, without effort and without anxiety, to produce admirable works, though, at the same time, completely ignorant of the principles and causes on which such effects necessarily depend; an inference, than which, in my opinion, nothing can be more erroneous and unfounded; being convinced that it would be impossible to find one instance wherein any high degree of excellence had been attained without great activity and exertion, and, consequently, considerable acquirements. The possessors of these supposed native talents had, it is true, been often denied the usual road to eminence; the gates of learning were perhaps shut to them; but we are not hastily to conclude from thence that they must have stood still; they defrauded the turnpike, and conducted their silent march another way, pursuing their journey not the less rapidly, though unaccompanied by the noise of flogging and whipping incident to travellers by the public stage. In short, whether observed or not, their time and talents must have been employed and exercised; and they profited of opportunities presented by chance, or procured by stealth, or there is no truth in the truest of all proverbs — "Out of nothing, nothing can come."

I do not, however, by what has been said, mean to assert, that the natural abilities of all men are on a par. I have allowed that equal degrees of industry and exertion will not in all cases produce equal effects; I only contend, that whatever differences may exist as to original capacity, still nature must be observed, art studied, and the mind well impregnated before any fruits of high flavour and excellence can be derived from it. Homer, Shakspere, Milton, Michelangelo,

and Raphael, may have been cast in a finer mould, "informed with purer fire," and adapted to receive, combine, and reflect images with greater facility, vivacity, and correctness, than other men; but I cannot suppose on different principles; and if their works were not the result of knowledge, labour, and experience, they produced them without materials, and are, consequently, less inventors than creators. On such an hypothesis, it would be the height of absurdity to speak of the progress or cultivation of the art; the coming of a poet or painter would be altogether accidental or providential, and the greatest artist might as probably have been Adam, or the first man that ever saw a pencil, as Apelles, or Raphael, though born under the most favourable circumstances, when the art was in its zenith. Nor ought we to have been more surprised, had Captain Cook found a Rubens carrying painting to perfection in Otaheite, than our ancestors were at seeing one doing the same in Flanders.

Next to the study of nature, and the fine examples produced by the art itself, reading of various kinds, chiefly of history, natural history, voyages, travels, works of imagination, and, above all, of poetry, in all its branches, may be considered as affording the most copious fund of materials, and imparting the most powerful stimulus to invention.

Poetry, in particular, bearing the closest analogy to painting, both arts setting out from the same place, journeying to the same end, and requiring the same kind of original powers, — both professing to improve upon their common models, to imitate instead of copying, to avoid the accidental blemishes and imperfections of individual nature, — to bring the scenes, actions, and persons represented before us, with all the attendant circumstances necessary to elucidate and embellish them, purified and exalted to the highest pitch of energy and beauty, and *such* as, though possible and probable, may never have actually existed, — we cannot wonder that drinking deep of the Pierian spring should have been forcibly recommended by all writers on the subject, as having the most direct tendency to exercise, warm, invigorate, and enrich the imagination, and excite noble and daring conceptions.

Here, however, it will be proper to remark, that, though from the acknowledged similarity in the principles and ef-

fects of these two arts, the one has been called *mute poesy*, and the other *speaking picture*, such is still the very great diversity in their modes and means of exerting their powers, that the study of one can, at best, be considered as a *general* only, and not at all as a *technical* help to invention in the other: the roads they take, though parallel, lie as entirely apart and unconnected as the senses of hearing and seeing, the different gates by which they enter the mind. The one operates in time, the other in space; the medium of the one is sound, of the other colour; and the force of the one is successive and cumulative, of the other collected and instantaneous. Hence the poet, in *his* treatment of a story, is enabled to bespeak the reader's favour by a graceful introduction, describing his characters, relating what has already happened, and showing their present situation, and thus, preparing him for what is to come, to lead him on, step by step, with increasing delight, to the full climax of passion and interest; whilst the painter, on the contrary, deprived of all such auxiliary aid, is obligated to depend on the effect of a single moment. That, indeed, is a critical moment, in which all the most striking and beautiful circumstances that can be imagined are concentrated, — big with suspense, interest, passion, terror, and action; in short, the moment of explosion, which illuminates and brings at once into view the *past*, *present*, and *future*, and which, when well rendered, is often more than equivalent to all the successive energies of the poet.

This contrariety in their means, in some degree separates and limits their fields of operation; and (though there are many subjects equally adapted to both arts) calls, in general, for a different principle in the choice of them. The most striking beauties, as presented to one sense, being frequently wholly untranslateable into the language of another, it necessarily results, that many interesting passages in history and poetry are incapable of affording more than a bald and insipid *representation on canvas*. Of this description is the incident in the Iliad, where one of Priam's younger sons, fallen before the superior force of Achilles, solicits his life on account of his youth. "Wretch!" exclaims the furious hero, "dost thou complain of dying, when thou knowest that Achilles must shortly die?" Such, also, is the celebrated

passage in Corneille's Horatii, where the father of one set of the combatants, on being informed that his son, left single against his three antagonists, had turned his back, appears much agitated and enraged; and when one of his attendants asks, "What should your son have done against such a disparity?" instantly retorts, "He should have died." Enthusiastic strokes of energy and sublimity like these, irresistibly command warm and universal admiration; but, unfortunately for the pencil, they defy utterance by any power but words. Of the same class, also, is what passed in the council preceding the Revolution, between James II. and the old Earl of Bedford, whose son, the illustrious Russell, had suffered death in the foregoing reign: "My lord," said the king, addressing himself to the earl, "you are an honest man, have great credit, and can do me signal service." "Sir," replied the earl, "I am a feeble old man, and very unable to afford you any considerable assistance;—but I had a son," added he, "who, if he had been living, could have served your majesty in a more effectual manner." James was so struck with this reflection, that he forbore to answer another word. This, which is a very striking piece of history, with the other passages just mentioned, and many more of a similar nature, have frequently been pointed out by people unacquainted with the proper limits of art, as subjects well calculated for the pencil; which is so far from being true, that they are all of them deficient in many of the principal requisites to make a good picture: they all allude to distant events and complicated circumstances, enter into feelings which have no decided outward and visible signs, and exhibit only ambiguous expression of countenance and unintelligible action, at which had a deaf man been present, he could have formed no idea of the remarkable peculiarity that distinguishes them from all other incidents, and to which they owe all their power of moving. In addition to this, they are also necessarily deficient in that variety and contrast of forms, ages, sexes, and draperies, which engage and entertain the sight, and sometimes, with skilful management, supply, in a degree, by picturesque effect, the want of real interest built upon striking situation, palpable sentiment, decided passion, beautiful forms, and

energetic action, the proper basis of all subjects peculiarly adapted to painting.

Invention, as a general power, undoubtedly depends on the command of a large fund of ideas, and an intuitive readiness of associating and combining them in every possible mode. This produces those radiant recollections by which the images of absent things are often almost involuntarily called up, with all the vivacity of real objects moving about us, and pursuing us as in a kind of waking dream. Thus the casual mention of the single word *battle* will, to some minds, instantly furnish out an endless chain of associated circumstances; cannons roar, clouds of smoke arise, the combatants on each side present themselves, we see them rush together, fight, struggle, and die: we hear their screams and shouts, notice all their various movements and changes of colour, advert to all the surrounding objects, observe how they are affected, and share their hopes, fears, compassion, rage, astonishment, or despair. To an Englishman of warm feelings, and a lively fancy, the word would perhaps suggest a different train of associated ideas, connected with another element: *his* imagination would present the picture of a sea-fight in all its accumulated horrors, — of ships sunk or blown up, batteries silenced, and whole fleets of the enemy at one stroke taken or destroyed; it might transport him instantly to Copenhagen, or the banks of the Nile, and force him to dwell with an equal mixture of grief, fondness, and exultation on the unparalleled deeds and the untimely fate of the hero of Trafalgar.

As a technical power, invention consists, not in composing, in the first instance, the story to be represented, but in seizing at once on the peculiar and prominent feature of the subject, placing it in the noblest and most interesting point of view, taking in all that belongs to the time and place chosen, discriminating the characters, entering into their situations, circumstances, and relations; and all this with a reference at the same time to the genius and powers of the art by which they are to be embodied. The painter, for instance, as soon as his mind is affected by the grand or the pathetic, instantly clothes his ideas in all that is touching and awful to the sight, and carries it out through the whole of his composition, which includes the invention and

disposition of every part, the managing his back-ground, throwing his lights and shades, and ordering the attitudes, and action, and expression of every figure that enters into, and constitutes a part of his work.

But though, in general, the poet and the painter borrow the skeletons of their stories from a foreign source, it is evident that neither of them holds his art as subservient to any other; their business is something more than to illustrate, explain, or fill the chasms of history or tradition: each, therefore, as soon as he has fixed on a subject, considers the end proposed, examines all the materials presented by his author, and all that his own mind suggests on the occasion, and selects, rejects, retrenches, adds, transposes, and moulds them all anew, till he has made them fit for his purpose; each adopts a chain of circumstances for the most part inapplicable in the case of the other; each avails himself of their common privilege of "daring every thing to accomplish his end;" not scrupling, on some occasions, to run counter, if necessary, even to matter of fact; for though most strictly bound to the observance of truth and probability, these are obviously very different from such as is required in history; his truth is the truth of effect, and his probability the perfect harmony and congruity of all the parts of his story, and their fitness to bring about the intended effect—that of striking the imagination, touching the passions, and developing in the most forcible manner the leading sentiment of the subject.

"It is allowed on all hands," says Sir J. Reynolds, "that facts and events, however they may bind the historian, have no dominion over the poet and the painter. With us, history is made to bend and conform to the great idea of art. And why? Because these arts, in their highest province, are not addressed to the gross senses, but to the desires of the mind, to that spark of divinity which stirs within, impatient of being circumscribed and pent up by the world which is about us. Just so much as our art has of this, just so much of dignity, I had almost said of divinity, it exhibits; and those of our artists who possessed this mark of distinction in the highest degree, acquired from thence the glorious appellation of divine." Lord Bacon also justly observes, that "the human mind is never satis-

fied with the distribution of things as they are ordinarily met with in common life; it pants after a higher order of excellence, and creates to itself a world of its own, possessing more grandeur, and exhibiting more exalted and more perfect instances of heroism, enthusiasm, patience, fortitude, and justice, than the present dispensation of things admits of." The opinions of these great men will probably meet with corresponding sentiments in every breast; for it cannot be doubted, that to fill this craving void in the imagination, to supply the imperfections of natural objects, to embody the highest possible ideas of excellence, and finally, to inspire mankind with zeal and affection for all that is truly great and lovely, or, as the poet expresses it,

"To raise the genius, and to mend the heart,"

is one of the first and most important, if not the only proper, object of painting and poetry.

The principle of deviating from real fact and individual forms in search of higher excellence, however strange it may appear to such as have paid little attention to the subject, is far from being new or singular; it has, indeed, been the general opinion of the enlightened part of mankind in all ages. "He," says Proclus, "who takes for his model such forms merely as nature produces, will never attain perfection; for the works of nature are full of dissonance and disproportion, and fall very short of the true standard of beauty."* On this account Demetrius was blamed for being too natural, and Dionysius ironically called the *man*-painter.† Lysippus, on the contrary, adhering to the precept of Aristotle given to painters and poets, boasted that he made men, not as they were, but as they ought to be; and Phidias astonished all those who beheld the forms he gave to his gods and heroes,

* This passage is quoted by Reynolds in his Third Discourse, from Junius *De Pictura Veterum*.—W.

† This Demetrius was the sculptor of that name, and apparently a contemporary of Phidias. He made a statue of Simon, the first author on equitation, who found fault with the horses of Micon for the under-eyelashes which he gave them; Demetrius was therefore probably the contemporary of Micon, who was contemporary with Phidias. The Dionysius mentioned is probably Dionysius of Colophon, though Dionysius the *man*-painter (Anthropographos) is mentioned only by Pliny, and among the later artists. (*Hist. Nat.* xxxv. 10. 73.) — W.

not, according to Cicero, by copying any object ever presented to his sight, but by contemplating the more perfect idea of beauty in his mind, to the imitation of which all his skill and labour were directed.* From this care to advance their art, even beyond nature itself in her individual productions, arises that admiration, that almost adoration, which is paid by all competent judges to those divine remains of antiquity that are come down to us. Hence Phidias, Lysippus, and other great sculptors, are still held in veneration; and Apelles, Zeuxis, Protogenes, and other excellent painters, though their works have perished, are, and will for ever be, admired. They all, in the glowing language of a celebrated Italian author, "drew after the light of fancy, the examples of mind, which alone gives animation, energy, and beauty to art, and causes the loves and the graces to descend and take up their habitation in the hardest marble, and to subsist in the emptiness of light and shadow."

Nor have the moderns, though unable as yet to attain equal perfection, been less convinced than the ancients of the power of this superior principle in art. Leonardo da Vinci instructs the painter to form this idea to himself, and Raphael writes thus to Count Castiglione concerning his Galatea; "To paint a beauty it is necessary to see many beauties; but because there is so great a scarcity of lovely women, I am constrained to make use of one certain idea, which I have formed in my own fancy as a model."† Thus also Guido Reni, when sending to Rome his picture of St. Michael, painted for the church of the Capuchins, wrote at the same time to Monsignor Monsano, the pope's steward, in the following manner: "I wish I had the wings of an angel to have ascended into Paradise, and there to have beheld the forms of beatified spirits, from which I might have copied my archangel; but not being able to mount so high, and it being vain for me to search for his resemblance here below, I was forced to make an introspection into my own mind, and to have recourse to that idea of beauty which I had formed in my imagination for a prototype, where I have likewise created the contrary idea of deformity and ugliness;

* The remark of Cicero alluded to, which is also quoted by Reynolds (*l. c.*), is in the *Orator*, c. 71. — W.

† See note to Barry's Third Lecture. — W.

but I leave the consideration of that till I paint the devil, and in the mean time shun the very thought of it as much as possible." On this letter it may be remarked that, though Guido felt the necessity of seeking aid from the ideal principle, it is clear he did not understand its full extent and import in art; for the ideal, if it mean any thing, means the selection and assemblage of all that is most powerful and best calculated to produce the wished-for effect, and relates to the management of a whole composition, and to the just delineation of a bad moral character as much as to that of the most beautiful and amiable. Thus Iago, Macbeth, and Shylock, are as beautifully drawn, and as perfect in a dramatic point of view, — perhaps even more so, — than Othello, Hamlet, Imogen, or Ophelia. The combination of mere deformity and ugliness can only represent disgusting and contemptible imbecility, calculated perhaps to frighten children in a nursery, but nothing more: such a picture, to borrow an expression from a noted satirist, might be a damned thing, *but certainly not the devil.* He, "whose face deep scars of thunder had entrenched, who stood like a tower, whose form had not yet lost all its original brightness, nor appeared less than archangel ruined, and through excess of glory obscured," must be derived from the same elevated source of invention, and composed, though of different materials, on the same pure and refined technical principle as his more virtuous and happy antagonist: in the one must be embodied all that denotes the powerful, the terrible, and the malignant; as, in the other, all that appears majestic, amiable, and beneficent; and nothing, surely, can prove the force of Milton's genius, and the purity of his taste, more decisively than this circumstance, that, while other poets contented themselves with exhibiting the prince of evil as a wretched, deformed, diminutive, pitiful hobgoblin, he alone, possessed by the true spirit of the ancient painters and sculptors, drew a character of him which, for sublimity of conception, felicity of execution, and powerful effect, equals or surpasses any thing of the kind that the art of poetry has yet produced, and which, in its way, may justly be considered as the *ne plus ultra* of human invention.

But, however allowable, and even necessary, the use of poetical licence may be to a painter, he is not therefore to

imagine himself warranted in the indulgence of every kind of liberty that caprice or ignorance may suggest. Experience will soon teach him, that though he is not confined to mere fact and the exact shape of his model, nor brought upon oath to declare "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth;" he is yet only freed from the letter, to bind him more closely to the spirit of his subject, and if he does not show precisely how it happened, he has the harder task assigned him of showing how it *might* and *should* have happened, to make the greatest possible impression on the spectator. His imperfections will not be excused, like those of the naturalist and historian, by laying the blame on the original; the unities of time, place, and action must be strictly observed, and, above all, a perfect harmony and consistency of parts and style can never be dispensed with; for, however they may be mixed in *nature*, in *art* the grave will not suit with the gay, nor the ludicrous with the terrible; the heroic and the sacred must never be associated with the mean and the trivial, nor will the authority and masterly execution of a Paul Veronese reconcile us to the ostentatious displays of such puerile incidents as a cat clawing the meat, or a dog gnawing a bone, in the foreground of a picture of the Last Supper. Hogarth told his story as perfectly, and with as much ingenuity, as Raphael; but their styles would bear no mixture, as the meanness of character, and the strokes of wit, humour, and satire, with which the former abounds, and which make so large a part of his merits, would by no means become the classical dignity and energetic gravity of the latter. Such, therefore, as is his subject, such must be the artist's manner of treating it, and such his choice of accompaniments. His background, and every object in his composition, animate or inanimate, must all belong to one another, and point to the same end; and under these restrictions he tramples with impunity on all vulgar bounds, and scruples not, on great occasions, to press the elements into his service, or even to call in the aid of imaginary beings and supernatural agency, to heighten the terrors of his scene, and more perfectly effect his purpose.

Thus Raphael, in his picture called the Incendio del Borgo *, has imagined a tempest (as appears by the driving

* One of the frescoes of the Vatican Stanze.—W

volumes of smoke and flame, and by the flying of the hair and draperies of his figures) to give effect and add to the horrors of the conflagration ; and, in another place, holds out the vision of St. Peter and St. Paul, with drawn swords and threatening looks, to wither the strength of Attila, and terrify him from his purpose of entering Rome.* Swayed also by similar motives, Shakspere made his witches assemble in a subterraneous cavern, or on a blasted heath, "in thunder, lightning, and in rain," and the more surely to excite our pity, and heighten our abhorrence of the cruelty and ingratitude of Lear's daughters, exhibits the old king mad, wandering by night, and exposed bare-headed to all "the pelting of the pitiless storm." In like manner, Milton, to impress on us more forcibly the terrible consequences of the transgression of our first parents, makes the heavens weep, and the earth groan at the completion of that mortal sin, which "brought death into the world, and all our woe ;" and thus Homer, to increase the importance of his heroes, and give dignity and interest to his subject, calls all the elements to his assistance, brings down the celestial, raises the infernal, deities, joins heaven, earth, and hell together, and suspends the fate of mortals and immortals, men and gods, equally on the issue of the combat.

To come nearer to our own times, I know of no one who has availed himself of poetic licence with more address than Sir Joshua Reynolds, in his celebrated picture of the Death of Cardinal Beaufort, painted for the Shakspeare Gallery.† The varied beauties of this work might well employ a great part of a lecture, but, at present, I shall pass them over, and attend only to what relates immediately to the question before us, the effect of the visionary devil, couched close, and listening eagerly behind the pillow of the dying wretch; which not only invigorates and clothes the subject in its appropriate interest and terror, but immediately clears up all ambiguity, by informing us that those are not bodily sufferings which we behold so forcibly delineated, that they are not merely the pangs of death which make him grin, but that his agony proceeds from those daggers of the mind, the overwhelming horrors of a guilty and an awakened con-

* In the fresco in the same apartments, known as the Attila.—W.

† Now in the Dulwich Gallery. —W.

science. This was the point on which rested the whole moral effect of the piece; it was absolutely necessary to be understood, and could by no other means have been so strongly and perspicuously expressed. An expedient, therefore, at once so necessary, so consistent with the spirit of the subject, and so completely successful, far from being regarded as an unwarrantable licence, is justifiable by all rules of sound criticism, and ought to be regarded as one of the most signal examples of the invention of the artist.

It is to be lamented that this most poetical incident, producing equal effect, and proceeding from the same power of fancy as that which caused the weird sisters to rise like bubbles and vanish with their enchanted cauldrons, which forged the air-drawn dagger to marshal Macbeth the way to Duncan, which dictated the resurrection to Banquo's ghost to fill the chair of the murderer, has not as yet been properly felt and appreciated according to its merits. So habituated are the people of this country to the sight of portraiture only, that they can scarcely as yet consider painting in any other light; they will hardly admire a landscape that is not a view of a particular place, nor a history unless composed of likenesses of the persons represented; and are apt to be staggered, confounded, and wholly unprepared to follow such vigorous flights of imagination, as would—*as will* be felt and applauded with enthusiasm, in a more advanced and liberal stage of criticism. In our exhibitions (which often display extraordinary powers wasted on worthless subjects,) one's ear is pained, one's very soul is sick with hearing crowd after crowd, sweeping round and, instead of discussing the merits of the different works on view (as to conception, composition, and execution), all reiterating the same dull and tasteless question, *Who is that?* and *Is it like?* Such being the case, it is no wonder that this work of our great painter has been condemned without mercy, by a set of cold-hearted, fac-simile connoisseurs, who are alike ignorant of the true end and the extensive powers of the art; who forget that Pegasus has wings to carry him unobstructed over mountains and seas, or who wish to have him trimmed, adorned with winkers, and reduced to canter prettily and properly on a turnpike road. Of the same class were those who of late endeavoured to rob the play of Macbeth of the

powerful and affecting incident of the ghost above alluded to. Happily, however, for the true lovers of Shakspere, the genuine feelings of the public have decided against this most barbarous mutilation, and happily for the real judges and lovers of painting, the illustrious artist in question, though warned, before the picture was finished, of the outcry that would be raised against his introduction of the busy, meddling fiend, did not give way to his squeamish advisers, but, confiding in his more refined taste, riper judgment, and nicer feelings, boldly committed his claims to POSTERITY, by whom the debt, due to him from the present age, will be discharged with interest, provided the art advances here in a manner equal to the expectations which are now universally raised. From the instances already mentioned, to which thousands more, and perhaps stronger, might be added, it may be inferred that all possible licence may be granted, and a work elevated to any degree of the extraordinary without incurring the censure of being extravagant, provided — but here the mighty labour lies, which may well deter any attempt much above the ordinary course of nature — provided that the trains of ideas are perfectly connected, and the whole completely consistent with itself; that there is no break or opening between them, nothing of a discordant nature suffered to interpose, to check the progress of the imagination, expose the illusion, and recall a different set of principles to the mind: this is all that is meant by probability in the imitative arts; and with this proviso, and no other, the precept of Horace takes place in its fullest extent, and painters and poets may do anything.

Invention may be demonstrated in every part of the art: Michelangelo shows it more particularly in the unrivalled breadth, simplicity, greatness, and energetic character of his forms, and style of design, as well as in the epic grandeur of his conception; Giorgione, and Titian, in being the first who gave the true appearance of visible objects by the force, depth, and richness of their colouring; Correggio and Rembrandt, in chiaroscuro; and Rubens in composition. All these may be considered as the discoverers of principles, and the givers of features and limbs to the art itself; of whom all who come after are necessarily more or less the copiers; and I have, in consequence, treated of them under the several

elementary heads to which they belong. But it yet remains to speak of invention in its more limited and specific sense, that is, the complete comprehension of any given subject in all its parts, or the discovery and combinations of all the circumstances necessary to exhibit it with the utmost precision, truth, and force possible; which, though possessed, in a greater or less degree, by all those I have just mentioned, is the peculiar province of Raphael alone, in which he reigns supreme, excelling in it not only all the moderns, but, for anything that appears to the contrary, all the ancients also. Raphael, more than any other man, felt immediately the whole force of his subject, saw what it had, what it wanted, or was fertile in expedients to explain and embellish it, and to supply its deficiencies. No man's mind possessed so wide a range, gathered in so completely all the circumstances belonging to time, place, and action, or combined them with so much skill. No man drew characters so multiplied and so various, discriminated them so nicely, entered so deeply into their feelings, and gave them such clear and decided expressions. Under the most barren surface he discovered mines sparkling with the richest ores, and, touched by his pencil, the most unpromising subject bursts at once on the spectator, vivid, picturesque, and teeming with circumstances striking, amusing, and instructive. Playing on the utmost verge of possibility, he is never extravagant, and, keeping always within the bounds of probability, he is never insipid; he never sacrifices the primary to a secondary object, but hastens to the important point, and draws, colours, groups his figures, invents, alters, or suppresses incidents, always with a view to the full expression of the principal action of the piece; in short, his story is always told with a grace, probability, perspicuity, ingenuity, force, and pathos, altogether captivating and surprising, and which we may doubt of ever seeing equalled, but are certain of never seeing surpassed. On the whole, therefore, it must be granted to Raphael, that, notwithstanding he seldom ascended the *brightest* heaven of invention, reached the conception of undescribed being, or rivalled the Greeks in the delineation of perfect beauty, enchanting grace, and character truly superhuman, he has, perhaps, reached the utmost extent of the art in pathos and expression, and so far explored the

natural regions, that it is scarcely possible to propose a subject, or imagine a situation, within the sphere of humanity, which he has not treated, or in the treatment of which some considerable assistance may not be derived from his works; and, take him for all in all, he undoubtedly forms the richest, most extensive, and most useful magazine of materials for study; with the least admixture of anything capable of misleading inexperience, of inspiring false taste, or of flattering the eye at the expense of the understanding.

It is happy for this country that it possesses many of the finest specimens of the powers of Raphael. The cartoon of the St. Paul preaching at Athens, is, of itself, a school of art, in which the student may find most of the principles of historical invention, composition, and expression, displayed in characters of fire, not addressed to the eye or imagination only, but also to the understanding and the heart. This will be more sensibly felt, and the painter's merit more clearly understood, by comparing his work with another, on the same subject, by Jacopo Bassano, in which that artist has, as usual, contrived to leave out all that dignifies, all that interests, all that characterises, and all that renders the story peculiarly proper for the pencil. As he knew St. Paul was but a man, he perhaps thought any man might be St. Paul, and taking the first unwashed artificer that came in his way, set him up as a model for the apostle, whom he consequently represents destitute of majesty, grace, action, or energy, and drawling out what no person attends to, or can believe worthy of attention. How different, on the same occasion, was the conduct of Raphael! He took into consideration, not the real person of the saint, which is said not to have been of the most imposing class, but the intellectual vigour of his character, the importance of his mission, and the impression that ought to be made on the beholder; and, as a painter cannot make his hero speak like a great man, he knew it was his duty to render his mind visible, and make him look and act like one; and we accordingly find him on a raised platform, in a pre-eminent situation equally commanding his audience and the spectators, with parallel outstretched arms, and in an attitude at once simple, energetic, and sublime, thundering with divine enthusiasm against the superstitions and abominations of the heathen, and seeming, in the lan-

guage of the prophet, to call on heaven and earth to bear witness to the truth of his doctrine.*

Instead of Athens, the university of the world, abounding with statues, adorned with all that is elegant and magnificent in architecture, and displaying on every side marks of unrivalled opulence and the most refined taste, Bassan presents us with three or four miserable huts, unworthy even of the name of a village; and, for an audience, we have a few half naked peasants, of the lowest class, with their wives and children, suited however, it must be confessed, to the preacher, to whom they pay at least as much attention as he deserves; that is, they neither hear nor see him, but proceed quietly in gathering apples, pressing grapes, shearing sheep, or their other usual employments. This artist painted what he saw admirably well, but he saw with his eye only; destitute of imagination, and ignorant of the powers of his art, of the time, place, nature, extent, and importance of his subject, he could not, like Raphael, transport us to Greece, and set us down in the midst of an assembly of philosophers; he could not penetrate their minds, discriminate their characters, nor, by their different expressions of curiosity, meditation, incredulity, contempt, and rankling malice, enable us, with no great assistance from fancy, to distinguish the Stoic, the Cynic, the Epicurean, the Jew Rabbi, and others appropriate to the occasion. We do not, as in the cartoon, see one touched, another confounded, a third inflamed, and a fourth appalled by the irresistible force of that eloquence, which, in the full conviction of Dionysius and Damaris, manifests its ultimate success, ensures the downfall of polytheism, and the final triumph and establishment of Christianity.

Such are the powers of the pencil when under the direction of a comprehensive mind; but it behoves every artist to measure his wings before he takes his flight, to appreciate his powers before he chooses his subject: otherwise, the greater the attempt, with inadequate abilities, the greater and more ridiculous will be the failure; as may be seen by Bassan, who in painting brass pots, copper kettles, and even men and women of the lowest class, and in their ordinary

* The figure of Paul preaching in this Cartoon, was adapted by Raphael from the figure of the same saint, by Masaccio, or more probably Filippino Lippi, in the church of the Carmine at Florence.—W.

employments, had scarcely an equal; and his pictures, where nothing higher is attempted, though not calculated to live in description, afford great pleasure to the sight by the freshness and harmony of the colouring, the spirit of the touch, and the illusive truth of the effect of the whole.

That Raphael was qualified to do justice to a great subject appears by the foregoing instance; that he equally knew how to enrich a barren one, will be seen by what follows; for where can be found a more decisive proof of invention — I had almost said creation — than in the cartoon of Christ's Charge to Peter? — a subject which, I will venture to say, offers very little capable of tempting a common mind and common powers to undertake it. But, however slightly the incident is touched by the historian, and however meagre it may appear in the book, in Raphael the whole is full, animated, connected, rounded, and *wound up to the highest pitch*, and, for conception, discrimination of character, composition, and expression, stands forward as one of his most distinguished works. In this picture the apostles are all collected into one compact group, as would naturally happen when any important communication was expected; and the Saviour, both by his majestic simplicity of action, and his detached situation, is evidently the principal figure of the piece. Before him St. Peter kneels, with joyful reverence, to receive the sacred charge; St. John, the beloved disciple, who may be supposed to feel some mortification at this choice of a pastor, presses forward with enthusiasm, as if to show that, in zeal and affection, he yields to no one; and the rest, though all *attentive* and *dignified*, are varied both in attitude and expression, with an extraordinary and surprising felicity of *management*, — some seeming to feel complete satisfaction in the preference given to Peter, — some to doubt its propriety, — some appear inclined to whisper disapprobation, — while the gestures of others betray their subjection to the demon of *envy*. All these varied and contrasted emotions, accompanied each by its appropriate action, and physiognomical character and temperament, which display so deep an insight into the human mind, are the pure offspring of the artist's imagination, and so happily supply the deficiencies of the historian, that, far from weakening or contradicting, they at once

aggrandise, embellish, and render the truth more lively, probable, and affecting.

It would be endless to enumerate all the instances of invention so profusely scattered over the works of Raphael, many of which, also, it would be difficult or impossible to explain, without having the pictures or engravings from them before us. I shall therefore content myself with adducing one more remarkable example of his powers in expression, and his ingenuity in telling his story.

In the cartoon of the Sacrifice at Lystra, the inhabitants of that city, it appears, are about to offer divine honours to Paul and Barnabas, and it was necessary that the cause of this extraordinary enthusiasm, the restoring the limb of a cripple, should be explained; which to any powers less than those under consideration, would, perhaps, have been insurmountable, for this reason, that painting having only the choice of one single moment of time, if we take the instant before the performance of the miracle, how can we show that it ever took place? if we adopt the instant after, how shall it appear that the man had ever been a cripple? Raphael has chosen the latter; and, by throwing his now useless crutches on the ground, giving him the uncertain and staggering attitude of a man accustomed to support, and still in some degree doubtful of his newly acquired power, and by the uncommon eagerness with which he makes him address his benefactors, points out both his gratitude and the occasion of it; and, still further to do away any remnant of ambiguity, he introduces a man of respectable appearance, who, lifting up a corner of the patient's drapery, surveys with unfeigned astonishment the newly and perfectly formed limb, in which he is also joined by others of the bystanders. Such a chain of circumstances, as Webb justly observes, equal to a narration in clearness, and infinitely superior in force, would have done honour to the inventor in the happiest era of painting in Greece.

But, though no man can more sensibly feel the force of Raphael's extraordinary powers, I cannot agree with a celebrated author, in justifying him for making the boat in the cartoon of The Miraculous Draught of Fishes, so exceedingly too diminutive for the figures it carries. "Had this boat," says Richardson, "been proportioned to the figures, it

would have filled the picture; and had the figures been reduced to a smaller scale, they would not have accorded with the rest of the set;" and hence he infers, that this apparent defect is the strongest proof of the judgment of the artist, in choosing the least of two evils, one of which was inevitable. But, unfortunately for this certainly ingenious defence, both the evils might have been easily avoided, two ways; first, by not bringing the whole of the boat into the picture; and secondly, which would have been the most masterly, by giving a foreshortened view of it, in which case it would have appeared of the proper capacity, without occupying more space on the canvas than it does at present. This, and a few other trifling errors, such as his making a house on fire in the back ground of one cartoon, and the introduction of a naked child in the foreground of another, may be mentioned, not as detracting anything from the superlative merits of Raphael, against which, had they been ten times more numerous, they would be but as dust in the balance, but merely to show that no authority, however gigantic, ought to be made a cover to negligence, or a sanction to impropriety.

The study of excellent works of every class, and, more particularly, of such as I have been mentioning, is a certain way to improve, if not to create, an inventive faculty; and I have no doubt that a person comparatively poor in natural gifts, who steadily pursues his purpose, and makes use of all the means open to him, would soon eclipse the strongest in native ability who neglects them, and trusts to himself alone;—which, after all, would be an attempt as ridiculous as arrogant—for, whether we wish it or no, nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand of our thoughts are necessarily suggested by the works of others.

LECTURE III. — ON CHIAROSCURO.

IN reading the history of painting, the pride of an Englishman cannot fail to be mortified while he observes that the encouragement of the art has, till very lately, been solely

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confined to the continent; that we hear nothing of British schools, establishments, painters, or patrons; that all writers on the subject seem to consider the hyperborean fogs of England as completely inimical and impervious to the rays of taste; and that, however justly we may boast our superiority in some points, the country has hitherto been forced to allow its deficiency in the most refined branch of civilisation, and content itself with a very subordinate rank among those who have aspired to the patronage of the fine arts.

Considering the energy of the British character, and the distinguished importance of the nation in the scale of Europe, can we wonder that this extreme deficiency, in points so essential to national honour, should have given rise to many contemptuous remarks, and much vain speculation, respecting the causes of it? But whatever the causes may be (and, doubtless, they cannot be derived from any creditable source), the assertions of Winckelmann, Abbé du Bos, and others, that the nation which has produced a Bacon, a Newton, a Milton, and a Shakspere, is naturally incapable of succeeding in painting, are an insult to common sense, originating in conceit, malice, or a confirmed stupidity, only to be equalled by the folly of another set of good-natured continental philosophers, who, confining taste to certain parallels, discover the genius of nations by a map and a pair of compasses, and wisely determine that no country situated in a higher latitude than fifty degrees north can succeed in the cultivation of the arts. Such puerilities deserve no answer. The causes that first obstructed, and perhaps still, in some degree, continue to retard, the progress of the arts in this island, are, by an ingenious writer, clearly proved to be the Reformation, and its immediate consequences.* In throwing off the Roman yoke, with all its impositions and superstitions, the nation unfortunately mistook reverse of wrong for right, and, because the arts were respected and patronised at Rome, rashly concluded that therefore they were certainly of a diabolical origin, and ought to be held up as objects of peculiar aversion and abhorrence to all true believers. Hence painting, in England, denied all public support, every noble use of it prohibited, and every source of encourage-

* See Barry's "Inquiry, &c." on this subject. *Works*, 1809, vol. ii. —W.

ment to its higher branches effectually dammed up, sunk into mere portraiture, the parasite of personal vanity, and was condemned for centuries to "flatter fools and chronicle small beer."

Happily this intolerable bigotry is now nearly extinct, and a lover of painting is no longer in danger of being considered as an idolator; but, though taste revives, and the arts begin to be received on a more respectable footing, it must still be confessed that little or no attempt has yet been made to rectify past errors, and do away this national opprobrium. Our halls and public buildings, instead of having their walls made the records of the virtues and heroic actions of our ancestors, and the oracles of philosophy, patriotism, and humanity, still remain barren and desolate; and our churches and temples destitute of all appropriate ornament corresponding to the magnificence of the architecture, appear more like prisons, or the dreary haunts of perturbed spirits, than places of worship for a devout, elegant, and enlightened people.

That this *has been* the case, though it must be lamented, it cannot, perhaps, be wondered at; but that this should *still be the case*—notwithstanding the growth of taste and more liberal opinions, notwithstanding the foundation of the Royal Academy, and the spirited example of the first individual in the country,—notwithstanding the generous offer of the English artists, some years ago, to decorate St. Paul's cathedral at their own expense*, and notwithstanding they have proved the practicability of raising the British character, in regard to the arts, as high as it justly stands in all other respects, by their having become the first school at present in Europe, on the mere scraps, offals, and *dog's-meat*

* This project was frustrated, as is well known, by Dr. Terrick, then bishop of London. Dr. Newton, bishop of Bristol and dean of St. Paul's, was favourable to the scheme, but when he applied to Dr. Terrick for his consent—"the old bishop," says Northcote, "patiently heard him to the end of his speech, when, assuming a very grave countenance, he replied, 'My good Lord Bishop of Bristol, I have already been distantly and imperfectly informed of such an affair having been in contemplation; but as the sole power at last remains with myself, I therefore inform your lordship, that whilst I live and have the power, I will never suffer the doors of the metropolitan church to be opened for the introduction of Popery into it.'"—*Life of Sir J. Reynolds*, i. 309.—W.

of patronage, afforded by hungry speculators, or falling by chance from the old masters' tables, — *this is to be wondered at.* And, taking also the opulence of the nation into the consideration, in addition to all other circumstances, I cannot but think the apathy of the public in regard to the arts is a something not easy to be accounted for. I hasten, therefore, to dismiss the subject, lest, on a further view, I should become an apostate to myself, and go over to the opinions of those shallow continental critics, whom I have just been attempting to hold up to ridicule and contempt.

One cause, however, of the discouragement of English art I will mention, which, though not to be charged with the whole, certainly contributes very considerably to the weight of the evil; that is, the vast and continual influx of old pictures into every part of the kingdom, more than nine-tenths of which, to the eye of true taste, offer nothing but a battered mediocrity, or worse, bad originals, and bad copies of bad originals, smoked, varnished, and puffed into celebrity by interested dealers and ignorant connoisseurs, and sold for sums that would have astonished the artists under whose names they are fraudulently passed*; to the utter starvation of all national attempts at excellence, which it is the business of these people to obstruct and decry, lest the public should, by degrees, become enlightened, and their property and markets be lost. I would not be illiberal; amongst these importers and dealers there are, no doubt, some who are well intentioned, who think they are rendering their country a service, by the introduction of works capable of exciting the dormant genius of their countrymen, and serving them as models for study and improvement: peace to all such! It is proper, however, to tell them, that this is mere galvanic encouragement; it may excite a few convulsive twitches, but will never inspire the arts with life and efficient activity. They should also be informed, that it is practice, and not models, which the artists of this country stand in need of;

* This traffic has now arrived at an extent that would have astonished even Opie. During the last few years the *old pictures* imported into London have exceeded an average of 1000 per month, most of which are copies. This copying is carried to that extreme in Italy, that many artists subsist entirely by repeatedly copying the same, at most three or four, pictures, or probably by copying even a single picture only.—W.

and that he who employs the humblest artist in the humblest way of history, contributes more to the advancement of national genius, than he that imports a thousand *chefs d'œuvres*, the produce of a foreign land. Let us, then, hear no more of dealers as patrons of art! They are no true votaries: they are but buyers and sellers in the temple of Taste, and, when the deity himself comes, will be driven forth with ignominy and stripes.

Before I quit this ungrateful theme, candour requires me to state, that opinions differ even on this subject. It has lately, to my great surprise, been discovered, that in no age or country have the arts been so splendidly and liberally encouraged as in England; that all proper stimulus has here been applied to exertion; that no artist has wanted employment but through his own demerits; and that all complaints and remonstrances are neither more nor less than libels on the nation. Hear this; injured, but immortal, shades of Hogarth, Wilson, Barry, Proctor, and many others equalled with you in fate!—of Hogarth, who was compelled to dispose of works of infinite, and till then unknown and unimagined excellence, by the disgraceful modes of raffle or auction; and who, in his ironical way, gave his opinion on the point in question, by dedicating one of his most beautiful prints to the King of Prussia, a patron of the arts;—of Wilson, who, though second to no name of any school or country in classical and heroic landscape, succeeded with difficulty, by pawning some of his works at the age of seventy, in procuring ten guineas, to carry him to die in unhonoured and unnoticed obscurity in Wales;—and of Barry, who, scorning to prostitute his talents to portraiture or paper-staining, was necessitated, after the most unparalleled exertions, and more than monastic privations, to accept of charitable contribution; and at last received his death-stroke at a sixpenny ordinary! It may, however, afford some consolation and some *hope*, to observe, that the public felt for Barry, that they acknowledged his abilities, subscribed readily to his necessities, and at least did

"Help to bury whom they help'd to starve."

Here I cannot but observe with pleasure, that, since the

above remarks were written, an event of a highly satisfactory nature has taken place, which every lover of the arts and his country must hail with heart-felt satisfaction.

Richardson, in his excellent treatise on the Theory of Painting, declares he has no doubt that the time is fast approaching when many English names will be found worthy to stand high in the list of modern artists; and in another place he says, "I am no prophet, nor the son of a prophet, but in considering the necessary concatenation of causes and effects, and in judging by some few visible links of the chain, I feel assured, that, if ever the true taste of the ancients revives in full vigour and purity, it will be in England." However visionary this expectation might have appeared in the author's lifetime, the first part has already proved well-founded: the names of Reynolds, Gainsborough, Wilson, Hogarth, Barry, and many others, would undoubtedly do honour to any modern school. Their works have for ever decided the question respecting the capacity of the English for excelling in painting; and the enthusiasm with which their success has inspired their successors, joined to the circumstance to which I just now alluded, the establishment of the British Institution, gives us abundant reason to hope that the full accomplishment of Richardson's prophecy will not long be delayed. The efforts of a powerful and patriotic body, composed of the first in rank, taste, knowledge, influence, and liberality, if properly directed, cannot fail of success. On them, therefore, every eye is turned, with a grateful confidence, that measures will speedily be adopted to put the hitherto neglected arts on a firm and respectable basis, to disseminate their principles, and forward the cultivation of them, in that style, and on that scale, best suited to their dignity and importance, best calculated to confer honour on the country, and hasten that desired period, when on this, as on every other ground, we may see,

> "Britain, conscious of her claim,
> Stand emulous of Greek and Roman fame."

After drawing, which I have already treated of as the only proper and stable foundation of the art, the next most important requisite towards obtaining the true representation of natural appearances, is the application of light and shadow,

or rather, what the Italians understand by the term *chiaro-scuro*, which includes not only light and shadow, as it affects each separate part, but the proper division and distribution of the whole surface of a picture into bright or dark masses, whether the darkness be produced by shadow, or by the proper colour of some of the objects represented. A black horse, or a black cloak, a brown, a deep red, or deep blue object, for instance, will be part of the obscure of a picture, even though it be painted as with the light falling on it. By light and shadow all objects, and parts of objects, are made to project or recede, to strike or retire, to court or to shun the attention of the spectator, agreeably to truth and propriety. What, as a mere drawing, was flat, tame, and monotonous, by the aid of this principle bursts forth at once into roundness and reality; entire figures are detached from their ground, seem surrounded by air, and spring forward to meet the eye with all the energy of life. Thus the painting of a Venus, by an ancient artist, was said to start from the canvas, as if she wished to be pursued. It gives depth, and marks the various distances of objects one behind another; and, if drawing be the giver of form, light and shadow must be allowed to be the creator of *body* and *space*.

In addition to this, if properly managed, it contributes infinitely to expression and sentiment; it lulls by breadth and gentle gradation, strikes by contrast, and rouses by abrupt transition. All that is grave, impressive, awful, mysterious, sublime, or dreadful in nature, is nearly connected with it. All poetical scenery, real or imaginary, "of forests and enchantments drear," where more is meant than is expressed; all the effects of solemn twilight and visionary obscurity, that flings half an image on the aching sight; all the terrors of storm and the horrors of conflagration, — are indebted to it for representation on canvas. It is the medium of enchanting softness and repose in the works of some painters, and the vehicle by which others have risen to sublimity, in spite of the want of almost every other excellence. In allusion to these known and acknowledged effects, the magic of light and shade is become a proverb.

The power of expressing the simple effects of light on detached objects may easily be acquired by drawing and shading after nature; but the knowledge of chiaroscuro, in its gene-

ral acceptation (consisting, as I have already observed, in the proper division of the whole surface of a picture into light or dark masses, with the connecting gradations of middle tint, local colour, and reflexes), can only be learnt by joining to practice a scientific observation of the more enlarged phenomena of nature, and a thorough investigation of the works of those masters who have excelled in this important branch of the art.

By scientific observation, it is not to be understood that a painter must necessarily be profoundly versed in optics: a general knowledge of its leading principles will be sufficient. He must consider this science, like anatomy, as a *means*, not as an end; otherwise he may waste his time in acquiring what will be of little or no value to him, instead of applying all his strength in the proper direction. He must be unwearied in observing nature in reference to his art, in watching all her effects, and in considering how they may be applied to relieve, vary, and enliven the different parts of his compositions, not only in regard to pleasing the eye, but also in respect to the mind and feelings, as they tend to inspire gaiety, to infuse melancholy, or awaken terror.

By studying the works of the great masters of chiaroscuro, he will, by degrees, become acquainted with all the artifices of contrasting light to shade, and colour to colour, to produce *rilievo;* of joining light objects together, and dark objects together in masses, in order to produce splendour and breadth of effect; of gradually sinking some objects wholly or partly in shadow, and losing their outlines in the ground, to produce softness and harmony; and of making, in other places, abrupt breaks and sharp transitions, to produce vivacity and spirit. He will also learn their rules for shaping their masses, and of adapting them, in regard to force or softness, to the nature of the subject, whether grave or gay, sublime, melancholy, or terrible. By this he must be directed when to give his light the form of a globe, or when to send it in a stream across his canvas; when to make a dark mass on a light ground, or a light mass on a dark ground; when he may let his light die away by imperceptible gradations; when to diffuse it in greater breadth and abundance; and when it may more properly be concentrated into one vivid flash.

These are some of the most approved methods of conduct-

ing the chiaroscuro, the ends of which, as may be inferred from what I have already said, are three: — first, by dividing the surface of the picture into light and dark masses, to please the eye, and prevent that confusion and perplexity incident to its being attracted by too great a number of parts of equal importance at once; secondly, to relieve or push into notice the principal objects, and to keep others in proper subjection, or sink them into obscurity, according to their several degrees of consequence or use in the composition; and lastly, by the manner of it, to aid expression, and give the first impression of the nature and predominant sentiment of the piece. But whether, in conformity to the prevailing passion, the shadows roll in midnight masses, enveloping the greater part of the picture, or are so faint as to be scarcely perceptible; whether they break with abrupt violence, or sweetly and gently steal upon the sight; whether they are warned and enlivened by reflexes, or preserve a sullen and uniform breadth; — one quality they should never, under any circumstances, be without, and that is *transparency*, which, at the same time that it is indispensable, is, unfortunately, one of the greatest practical difficulties of the art. Of that which depends on delicacy of eye, dexterity of hand, and practical knowledge of the materials, little, of course, can be explained by words; but every one will easily perceive, by experiment, and by study of the works of others, that a dark colour, laid thin upon a light one, will generally appear clear and pleasant, but that a light colour, laid thin upon a dark one, is almost always opaque and disagreeable. Hence the most efficacious way of preserving the transparency of shadows is to paint them rather faint at first, and give them their full warmth and depth by a second operation.

The chiaroscuro of a picture does not, however, depend on lights and shadows merely. Hot and cold, bright and dark colours, start from and avoid one another, with nearly as much vivacity as light from shadow; but a composition, painted entirely on this principle, will necessarily be feeble and flimsy, from the want of roundness and depth, which it is the property of shadow alone to bestow. Good pictures must partake of both principles, leaning to the opposition of *colours* in subjects of a gay, and to the opposition of *light*

and shadow in subjects of a graver or grander cast.* But, whatever be your subject, let your principal mass of light maintain its pre-eminence in size and splendour, like the centre of the system, from which all the others emanate, and by which they are all supported. Let the inferior ones be diversified in shape and quantity as much as possible; for equal quantities and similar shapes always produce hesitation and perplexity, unless the reason for it be immediately obvious; and, in addition to this, let your masses, if possible, lie somewhat in an oblique or diagonal direction with respect to each other, by which they will appear to fall more naturally into the stream of light, and, consequently, be more pleasing to the eye.

I would be far from recommending or countenancing a careless or inaccurate manner of handling; but, whilst I allow the necessity of your attention to the detail of your performances, I feel it my duty also to caution you not to neglect the general effect, and call upon you to remember, that, unless a breadth of light and shadow be preserved, invention loses half its force, drawing half its value, and the utmost finishing will be labour in vain.

† Every man in every profession must frequently find himself compelled to listen to common-place opinions on the subject of it, copied from author to author, and bandied from critic to critic, without sufficient examination. Among others of this description, concerning painting, I have often heard it dogmatically asserted, that the light of a picture must necessarily be all derived from the same source; and, consequently, that two rays or streams should never cross each other, nor the shadows be seen to fall in opposite directions. This opinion I have no hesitation in pronouncing a vulgar error, wholly unfounded in nature, and therefore likely to be mischievous in art.

In nature, particularly in the interior of buildings and other confined situations, lights will be often observed flowing from different and opposite sources; and the works of

* Rubens depends too much on opposition of colours.

† The following passage, as far as to "management of his chiaroscuro," was found on a loose paper lying at this part of the discourse, and is therefore here inserted.—*Note of Prince Hoare, the original editor of these lectures.*

the great masters must quickly convince all who study them, that, *in art*, provided the effects of them be truly represented, and the masses that compose the chiaroscuro of the picture be kept undisturbed and unbroken, the painter is at perfect liberty to introduce his lights in different directions, which, if well managed and properly accounted for, will be so far from creating confusion, that, on the contrary, they may impart to his composition a richness, splendour, and vivacity, unattainable by any other means.

I mention this to free the student from the weight of unnecessary shackles; but I would by no means recommend his attempting the use of light in two or more directions, till he has acquired a thorough knowledge of its effects in its most simple mode, and a competent skill in the management of his chiaroscuro.

It is not one of the least remarkable circumstances in the history of the art, that shadow, though the inseparable companion of light, the only criterion to the eye of roundness and projection, and, in its effects, no less pleasing than surprising, should have continued unknown and unnoticed for ages, by the Indians, the Persians, and the Egyptians anciently, and by the Chinese even to the present day.* The fact, however, seems indisputable; and some have even gone so far as to assert, that the Greeks were, equally with their neighbours, ignorant of this fascinating branch of the art; but for this calumny there appears not the shadow of a foundation: the works of their poets, orators, and philosophers abound with allusions to, and passages in the most lively manner describing, its effects. Longinus observes, that if we place, in parallel lines on the same plane, a bright and an obscure colour, the former springs forward and appears much nearer the eye: this is the first and simplest effect of the laws of chiaroscuro. Philostratus also tells us that Zeuxis, Polygnotus, and Euphranor, were, above all things, attentive to shade happily their figures†; and hence it was, no doubt, that

* See note on this subject, *ante*, p. 241.—W.

† Not exactly; the inference is hardly justified: the passage of Philostratus alluded to, is a vague sentence, which means anything or, rather, nothing. He says (*in vita Apollonii*, ii. 9.), that the works of these painters displayed τὸ εὔσκιον καὶ τὸ εὔπνουν καὶ το εἰσέχον τε καὶ ἐξέχον, that is, every possible effect — the obscure or shaded, the clear or airy, the retiring and the prominent. — W.

the paintings of Parrhasius were termed realities, being possessed of such a force of chiaroscuro as no longer to appear the imitations of things, but the things themselves.* Agreeable to this is the observation of an ancient writer, that, in painting, the contours of objects should be blended with, and sometimes lost in, the shade; for on this, joined to colouring, depend tenderness, roundness, and the similitude to truth. Nicias, the Athenian, is also praised by Pliny for his knowledge in this branch of the art. He preserved the lights and shades, and was particularly careful that his paintings should project from the canvas. But the greatest effect of this kind is, by the same author, attributed to the pencil of Apelles: — "In his portrait of Alexander in the character of Jupiter," says Pliny, "the fingers seem to shoot forward, and the lightning to be out of the picture." This passage is too striking to need a comment. What more could we say of the finest examples of modern art? What more could we expect from the pencil even of Rembrandt or of Reynolds!†

These quotations, to which innumerable others of equal weight might be added, are sufficient to rescue the Greeks from any imputation of ignorance on this head, were we not also in possession of ancient paintings which, though not of that, kind in which we ought to expect examples of the first class certainly contain merit enough to set the matter in question beyond dispute.

In the history of modern art, we find, as might be expected from what has just been stated, that design and colouring

* Apollodorus of Athens, the contemporary of Zeuxis and Parrhasius, was called *the Shadower* (ὁ Σκιαγράφος — Hesychius, *s. v.*). He may be termed the inventor of chiaroscuro among the Greeks, as Leonardo da Vinci was among the moderns. Dionysius of Colophon, the contemporary of Polygnotus, was, however, also distinguished for his effective light and shade, but probably for *mere light and shade;* the works of his successor, Apollodorus, were conspicuous for the more perfect development of *chiaroscuro*, in which the natural gradations and reflexes of the colours themselves also were given. See Plutarch, *de Glor. Athen.* 2. and *Timol.* 36. — W.

† This was the "Alexander Ceraunophorus," or Alexander wielding the Lightnings of Jupiter, which was dedicated in the temple of Diana at Ephesus, and for which Alexander gave Apelles nearly 50,000*l.* sterling. See the article on Apelles in the *Biog. Dict.* of the Soc. for Dif. U. K.—W.

take the lead considerably. Two hundred years elapsed from the time of Cimabue, with whom the modern accounts commence, to the time of Leonardo da Vinci, during which the succession of painters is complete, and a regular gradation of improvement noticed; yet we find no mention of effects of light and shadow, and if any attempts of that kind were made, we must conclude they were so faint and ineffectual as not to deserve observation, till the last-mentioned painter, whose character I have dwelt on in a former lecture, broke at once entirely through, and trampled under foot, the timid, flat, dry, and meagre manner of his predecessors, and taught his contemporaries and posterity to give rilievo and effect to their compositions, by a novel and daring opposition of light and shade. From him the surprising discovery was caught by Giorgione del Castelfranco, and carried to Venice, where, united to a new style of colouring, it rapidly spread its fascination, and became the foundation of the excellence of the Venetian school.

Chiaroscuro and colouring, being but varied effects of the same medium, assimilate so kindly together, that, since the time of their junction at Venice, no school, and scarcely any individual artist, has existed who has been eminent in one of those branches, without at the same time possessing considerable excellence in the other.

By this union, aided by the introduction of oil painting, which supplies, through the medium of glazing, richer, deeper, and more perfect shadows and tones than any other method, the Venetians were enabled to give that clearness, force, rilievo—in short, that perfect illusion which amounted, in their limited conceptions of the subject, to a complete representation of nature. I say, their limited conceptions, because, though "the gorgeous East, with richest hand," showered pearls and gold into the lap of Venice (and painting was, in consequence, liberally and enthusiastically encouraged), she possessed no remains of antique sculpture to elevate the imaginations of her artists, generate ideas of true beauty, and lead them to attempt combinations of greater purity and consistency than are to be met with in ordinary life. Acquainted more with Asiatic luxury than with Grecian taste, the painters of Venice sought rather for magnificence than grandeur, are more remarkable for splendour than for

elegance, and possess more truth of effect than refinement of character in their works.

Correctness of design being in no wise necessary to illusion, was, of course, neither attempted nor thought of by them; and painting, under their tuition, instead of speaking an universal language, equally intelligible to all nations and in all ages, only learned to speak with surprising volubility her mother-tongue. It cannot be denied that they painted nature; but it was nature in its every-day dress, disfigured by accident, unchosen, unimproved, and "sent to its account with all its imperfections on its head."

Of the works of Giorgione, the real founder of the Venetian school, there are many specimens now existing in this country, which, for harmony of colour, and depth of tone, are still deservedly objects of great admiration, and prove him to have excelled his master Da Vinci in these qualities, as much as he was himself afterwards exceeded by Titian.*

His genius, indeed, was such, that, had he not been cut off by the plague at the early age of thirty-two, it is not probable that he would ever have been outstripped by his more fortunate rival and companion.

As Titian, though a great master of chiaroscuro, was still more eminent for colouring, I shall reserve his character to be particularly discussed under that head, and pass on to the consideration of the merits of the Lombard school, at the top of which stands the name of Antonio Allegri, commonly called, from the place of his birth, Correggio. Of this extraordinary man, who, to use the words of Milton —

> "Untwisted all the strings that tie
> The hidden soul of harmony,"—

the accounts which are transmitted to us are more confused, contradictory, and uncertain than those of any other painter of eminence. His age, the times of his birth and death, and most of the circumstances of his life, are enveloped in an obscurity which seems to increase with every attempt at its elucidation.

By some we are told that he was born, bred, and lived in

* That Giorgione adopted his style of light and shade from the works of Leonardo da Vinci at Milan is a mere conjecture, yet it is both possible and probable. Giorgione died in 1511, in his thirty-fourth year.—W.

poverty and wretchedness, and that he died at the age of forty, from the fatigue of carrying home a sack of halfpence, or copper money, paid him for one of his grandest works; and we are called upon to admire and respect a genius who, against the ordinary course of things — without having seen Rome, the works of the ancients, or those of the great painters, his contemporaries; without favour or protection, or going from home to seek them — in straitened circumstances, and with no other helps than his own industry, the contemplation of nature, and the affection he had for his art, has produced works of a sublime kind, both for thought and execution.

On the other hand, Mengs, his most devoted admirer, who made every possible inquiry concerning him, contends that he was of a good family, and lived in opulence; that he had every advantage of education, both general and professional; that he had been at Rome and Florence, and had, consequently, seen the works of Da Vinci, Michelangelo, and Raphael; that he studied philosophy, mathematics, painting, sculpture, and architecture, and conversed familiarly with the most famous professors of his time.*

Though this latter opinion seems to be founded on but a questionable authority, I own I am inclined to adopt it in a great degree, as, to any attentive examiner of the works of Correggio, the former account must appear absolutely incredible. The evidence of his works would lead one to conclude that he had not only seen those of the last mentioned painters, but also the works of Titian, and that he had borrowed the elements of light and shade from the first, something of the grandeur of his contour from the second, and colouring from the last; to which he superadded qualities peculiarly his own, and formed a style, which, though less learned in design than that of Michelangelo, and less true in colouring than that of Titian, infinitely exceeded Da Vinci's in force,

* See the life of Correggio by Pungileoni, *Memorie Istoriche di Antonio Allegri detto il Correggio*, Parma, 1817–21, upon which is founded the memoir of him in the *Sketches of the Lives of Correggio and Parmigiano*, London, 1823. The principal facts of Correggio's life are briefly given, also, in the *Catalogue of the National Gallery*. He died of a fever at Correggio, March 5. 1534, in his forty-first year. He does not appear to have ever been in poor circumstances. — W.

and was, on the whole, more exquisitely captivating to the eye than anything that had yet appeared in the art.

Of chiaroscuro, on the grandest scale, as it extends to the regulation of the *whole* of a work, he was certainly the inventor. Antecedently to him no painter had attempted, or even imagined the magic effect of this principle, which is strikingly predominant in all that remains of Correggio, from his widely extended cupolas to the smallest of his oil paintings: its sway was uncontrollable; parts were enlightened, extended, curtailed, obscured, or buried in the deepest shade, in compliance with its dictates; and whatever interfered (even correctness of form, propriety of action, and characteristic attitude) was occasionally sacrificed.

To describe his practice, will be, in a great degree to repeat my observations on chiaroscuro in its enlarged sense. By classing his colours, and judiciously dividing them into few and large masses of bright and obscure, gently rounding off his light, and passing, by almost imperceptible degrees, through pellucid demi-tints and warm reflections, into broad, deep, and transparent shade, he artfully connected the fiercest extremes of light and shadow, harmonised the most intense opposition of colours, and combined the greatest possible *effect* with the sweetest and softest *repose* imaginable. The same principle of easy gradation seems to have operated as his guide in respect to design, as well as in colouring and chiaroscuro. By avoiding straight lines, sharp angles, all abrupt breaks, sudden transitions, and petty inflexions, and running by gentle degrees from convex to concave, and *vice versâ*, together with the adoption of such forms and attitude as admitted this practice in the highest degree, he gave his figures that ease, elegance, and flexibility, that *inimitable grace*, which, in honour of the inventor, has since obtained the appellation of *Correggiesque*.

This rare union of grace, harmony and effect, forms the skill of Correggio, which, whilst it operates, suspends judgment, and disarms criticism. Entranced and overcome by pleasing sensation, the spectator is often compelled to forget incorrectness of drawing and deficiency of expression and character. These defects, however, it has already been observed, are but occasional; and though, in comparing him with Raphael, it may justly be said, that the one painted best

the effects of body, and the other those of mind, it must also be acknowledged that modesty, sweetness, and the effusions of maternal tenderness have never been more forcibly expressed than by the pencil of Correggio.

The turn of his thoughts, also, in regard to particular subjects, was often, in the highest degree, poetical and uncommon; of which it will be sufficient to give, as an instance, his celebrated *Notte*, or painting of the Nativity of Christ, in which the circumstance of his making all the light of the picture emanate from the child, striking upward on the beautiful face of the mother, and, in all directions, on the surrounding objects, may challenge comparison with any invention in the whole circle of art, both for the splendour and sweetness of the effect, which nothing can exceed, and for its happy appropriation to the person of Him who was born to dispel the clouds of ignorance, and diffuse the light of truth over a darkened world!

This circumstance, at once sublime, beautiful, and picturesque, is one of those rare instances of supreme felicity, by which a man may be said to be lost in his own glory. The thought has been seized with such avidity, and produced so many imitations, that no one is accused of plagiarism: the real author is forgotten, and the public, habituated to consider the incident as naturally a part of the subject, have long ceased to inquire when or by whom it was invented.*

From Correggio, in pursuing the progress of chiaroscuro, we naturally turn our attention to the Carracci, the founders of the Bolognese school, who, though not absolutely equal to their great predecessor in chiaroscuro, excelled him in design, and perhaps in some other branches of the art. Lodovico, in particular, is highly and justly extolled for the modest breadth, and affecting simplicity, of his style, and pointed out by Sir Joshua Reynolds, as the best model for that dignified tone, that *solemn twilight*, so productive of sentiment, and so properly and exclusively suited to all subjects of a grave, philosophical, or religious character.

Lodovico, with his two cousins, Annibal and Agostino

* The invention of Correggio was in its application; for a very similar idea was previously adopted by Raphael, in one of the compartments of the Vatican fresco of St. Peter delivered from Prison—the *light* proceeds from the angel. — W.

Carracci, attempted, by selecting the beauties, supplying the defects, correcting the errors, and avoiding the extremes of their predecessors, to unite all the excellencies of the art, and form a perfect style: a plan, which has been derided by some eminent critics, as absurd, visionary, and impracticable; but as they have neglected to show wherein the different merits of the different schools are incompatible with each other, so they have failed to convince me that the attempt to reconcile them was ill-judged, and tended, directly or indirectly, to mediocrity and the extinction of character. What if the Carracci have not completely succeeded? What if they be, in some degree, inferior to each of those whom they proposed to imitate in his particular way? — to Michelangelo in design, to Raphael in expression, to Titian in colour, and to Correggio in force and harmony of chiaroscuro? The combination, as far as it goes, is excellent; and that it is not more so is, undoubtedly, owing to nothing absurd in the attempt, but to insufficiency of ability to carry it properly into execution. For where is the proof that all the different beauties of art are not in perfect unison with each other? That the whole is more difficult to grasp than a part, is not to be denied; but let us beware of making our feebleness the measure of possibility. Had there been more correctness in the drawing, more elevation in the character, and more truth in the expressions of the celebrated picture by Correggio just mentioned, can it be supposed that its effect would therefore have been less splendid and fascinating? and had the Transfiguration, by Raphael, partaken more of Michelangelo's grand style of design, and of the breadth and splendour of Correggio's chiaroscuro, which the subject seems particularly to demand, can it be supposed that these excellencies would have lessened in any degree the truth of expression which it now possesses, and that it would therefore have become insipid? Can it be supposed that The Hours leading out the Horses of the Sun, painted by Julio Romano, would have been less poetical and celestial, had they possessed more harmony, brilliancy, and truth of colouring? Yet this has been supposed, and by a writer whose name I revere, and whose works will be an honour to this country as long as taste and genius continue to attract admiration. But though I respect

him much, I respect *truth* more, which I think will bear me out in maintaining the contrary opinion. Celestial objects, according to our conceptions of them, differ from terrestrial ones, not in essence but in beauty, not in principle but in power; and our representations of them should possess all the splendour and effect, as well as all the vigour, spirit, and elevation of character, possible. To a certain portion of spirit and character it was doubtless owing that, in *spite* of, and not by the aid of defects, Julio Romano's horses became objects of admiration; and, had these excellencies been joined to the others with which they are always associated in our minds, the effect of the work must have been proportionally greater, and it would have consequently stood still higher in the scale of art.

Such paradoxical opinions cannot be too closely examined, as they tend directly to arrest the progress of art, and prevent those attempts, by which alone perfection must (if ever) be obtained. For what is perfection but the complete union of all parts of the art, and, if they are incompatible, what have we to hope for?

But the Carracci do not stand in need of arguments in behalf of their principles, while such a work exists as that (which all must remember) of The Three Marys Weeping over the Body of Christ*; in which are actually combined the excellencies of drawing, chiaroscuro, colouring, composition, and expression, each to a degree which we have seldom seen surpassed; and, had it possessed a corresponding dignity and beauty of character, I should not hesitate to place it at least on a level with the first productions of modern art.

This picture alone sufficiently justifies the rationality of those gigantic attempts which, had they been completely successful, would have involved the names of the proudest predecessors of the Carracci in comparative obscurity; this answers all objections to their plan, affords a complete evidence of its practicability, and warrants the hope of its being, at some future period, carried more effectually into execution.

The deep-toned sobriety of the Carracci was quickly followed by the meteor-like glare of [Michelangelo da] Cara-

* By Lodovico Carracci, and now at Castle Howard. —W.

vaggio, who, from love of novelty, or an insatiable desire of force, too frequently disjointed his composition, separated every spot of light by intense shadow, plunged at every step from noon-day to midnight, and, instead of *conducting*, tore his chiaroscuro to rags: *his*, indeed, is not so properly chiaroscuro, as light and shadow run mad.

By his want of connecting demi-tints, and reflected lights, and total neglect of every kind of gradation, he missed all the unity, harmony, and grace so delightful in Correggio. Hence, though he undoubtedly possessed great force, great boldness of penciling, and freshness and truth of colour, he cannot, except in very particular subjects, be safely recommended as an object for imitation. He has, nevertheless, in his happier moments, produced works of very considerable merit. His Entombing of Christ, for instance, now in the museum at Paris*, for chiaroscuro and composition, as well as the excellencies above mentioned, may challenge comparison with most of the productions of the Carracci; and no story was ever more happily told on canvas then that of his Gamesters Cheating a Young Man at Cards.† Innocent cullibility on one part, and brutality and cunning on the other, cannot be more forcibly expressed; each face is a volume, in which the whole history of the man, — past, present, and future, — is written in legible and indelible characters.

It must be understood that the great fault of Caravaggio is the want of connecting gradation, and not the depth of his shadows, without which, on a flat surface, what relief or projection can be obtained? Sir Joshua Reynolds justly blames his immediate predecessors, and youthful contemporaries, for a mawkish insipidity, chiefly owing to a timid deficiency of shadow, of which, both by precept and example, he recommends the liberal use, as also of colours vividly and distinctly opposed to each other, and justifies himself by an appeal to the works of the greatest masters, in which there is generally found, in every picture, a part as light, and a part as dark, as possible. As a general rule, Sir Joshua's advice is, undoubtedly, excellent; but it is not

* Now in the gallery of the Vatican at Rome.—W.

† In the gallery at Dresden.—W.

necessary, like Bottom, in the Midsummer Night's Dream, and Caravaggio, to play the tyrant, and make all split on every occasion. On the contrary, subjects will sometimes occur that admit, nay, that require, a very different practice. An instance of this kind will readily present itself to the memory of every one who has seen the picture of the Deluge by Poussin. In this work there appears neither white nor black, nor blue, nor red, nor yellow: the whole mass is, with little variation, of a sombre grey, the true resemblance of a dark and humid atmosphere, by which every object is rendered indistinct and almost colourless. This is both a faithful and a poetical conception of the subject; nature seems faint, half dissolved, and verging on annihilation, and the pathetic solemnity, grandeur, and simplicity of the effect, which can never be exceeded, is entirely derived from the painter's having judiciously departed from, and gone into direct opposition to general practice.

That there is no rule without an exception is proverbially true; and, far from contradicting it in regard to painting, I am inclined to believe that every subject, if properly treated, would require some deviation from the established laws, — some licence, some appropriate management peculiar to itself; such as we see exemplified in the *Notte*, by Correggio, and the *Deluge*, by Poussin. Till something of this kind happens we may conclude the subject has not been perfectly conceived, and is open for further trials; but, when the blow has once been thus happily struck, there is nothing left for followers but humble imitation. The style of Caravaggio astonished by its boldness, delighted by its novelty, and, for a time, produced many imitators, among whom we may reckon the celebrated names of Guido Reni, and Guercino da Cento, who, though they softened somewhat the hardness of his chiaroscuro, never equalled him in the freshness and clearness of his colouring. Guido, indeed, finding himself unequal to his model, soon quitted the style altogether, and adopted another in perfect opposition, which, though a better vehicle for mannered beauty and theatric grace, was as far removed by its flimsiness from true taste, as was that of Caravaggio by its outrageous strength.

The nature of my subject requires that I should follow

the art from Italy into Holland, where, though its revival cannot by any means be said to be complete, the branch of which I am now treating, as also some others, was carried to a perfection highly deserving notice.

To the Dutch school, all that has been said of the Venetian applies with double and treble force. Ugliness was beauty to them. They not only did not seek what was grand, elevated, and perfect, but studiously avoided it: and climbing downwards with an inverted taste, seemed to delight in baseness and deformity, and to make them objects of preference. In their histories they sacrificed, without mercy, all decorum, all propriety, all regard to costume, all beauty, truth, and grandeur of character. Gods, emperors, heroes, sages, and beauties, were all taken out of the same pot, and metamorphosed by one stroke of the pencil into Dutchmen. Noah was only the first skipper, and Abraham a fat burgomaster of Amsterdam.

Yet, in spite of meanness and disproportion, in spite of their neglect of some rules, and their ignorance and open defiance of others, — how vain is judgment, criticism how weak! — they have produced works, which the purest sensibility and the most refined taste cannot reject, which the best cultivated eye dwells on with pleasure, and by which we are, for a moment at least, compelled to forget that the art has anything of a higher class to bestow.

There are, indeed, shallow and supercilious critics, without comprehension to take in the whole of art, without judgment to discern all the ends proposed by it, and without taste to relish every kind of excellence — who, with a morbid appetite, rejecting what is offered, constantly sigh for all that is absent, and, with eager solicitude to be displeased, always dwell on defects and improprieties, — who see only Raphael's want of colour, Titian's want of form, Correggio's want of expression, and Rubens' want of grace; such, ever ready to flatter themselves into the belief that they possess exquisite taste and refined judgment, will, doubtless, think the Dutch school altogether beneath their notice; but hazardous as it may be, I will venture to say, that such an opinion can only be pronounced by those whose judgment is depraved, and who are totally devoid of taste. True critics, who exercise the rod not from vanity but from taste,

not from malice but affection, who can discover and discriminate beauties from defects, however unhappily they may be mingled, will readily allow the claims of the Dutch artists to considerable praise.

At the head of the Dutch school, and foremost among those who, in the opinion of some critics, cut the knot instead of untying it, and burglariously entered the Temple of Fame by the window, stands the name of Rembrandt, called *Van Rhyn*, from his birth-place, a village on that river near Leyden. His father, a miller, put his son under one Lastman, a tolerable painter of Amsterdam; but by what means he was led to adopt that peculiar manner which distinguishes his works is not now to be discovered.* Of his singularities it is, however, recorded, that he used to ridicule the antique and the ordinary methods of study, and that he had a large collection of strange dresses, old armour, and rich stuffs, which he called his antiques, and which it is obvious he made use of as models in his principal works. There is, also, a story related of him, which shows him to have been no less a humourist than a genius; which is, that finding his works, at one period of his life, accumulating on his hands, he resolved to make a sale of them; but, unfortunately, it seems the public in Rembrandt's time very much resembled the public at present, and scorned to buy the works of a *living* artist. In this dilemma he had no resource but to secrete himself, pretend to be dead, put his wife into widow's mourning, and ordered a mock funeral. After this his sale went on with uncommon success; when it was ended Rembrandt rose from the dead, to the great joy of his disconsolate wife, and received the congratulations of his friends on the happy termination of his excellent joke. Being, at another time, reproached for the boldness and roughness of his manner of laying on his colours, he replied, "I am a painter, and not a dyer."

* Rembrandt Gerritz was born June 15. 1606, at his father's mill on the Rhine, between Leyerdorp and Koukerk near Leyden. His first master was Jacob Van Swanenburg, with whom he remained three years. He died at Amsterdam, July 19. 1664. See the *Catalogue of the National Gallery*.—W.

What was so happily said of Burke, might with equal truth be applied to Rembrandt —

> "Whose genius was such
> That one never can praise it, or blame it too much."

He seemed born to confound all rules and reasoning. With the most transcendent merits he combines the most glaring faults, and reconciles us to them; he charms without beauty, interests without grace, and is sublime in spite of disgusting forms and the utmost vulgarity of character. His deficiencies would have fairly annihilated any other man; yet he still justly claims to be considered as a genius of the first class. Of chiaroscuro he ranged the whole extent, and exemplified all its effects in all its degrees, changes, and harmonies, from the noon-day blaze to when the

> "Dying embers round the room
> Teach light to counterfeit a gloom."

In richness and truth of colouring, in copiousness of invention and energy of expression, he equalled the greatest of his predecessors, and whatever he attempted he rendered with a degree of truth, of reality, of illusion, that defies all comparison. By these powers he seemed to be independent of his subject; it mattered not what he painted, his pencil, like the finger of Midas, turned every thing he touched to gold; it made defects agreeable, gave importance to trifles, and begat interest in the bosom of barrenness and insipidity itself.

But, though thus gifted to dwell with nature in her simplest retirement, he was no less qualified, with a master's hand and poet's fire, to follow and arrest her in her wildest flights; all that was great, striking, and uncommon in her scenery, was familiar to him; yet he chiefly delighted in obscurity and repose; mystery and silence floated round his pencil, and dreams, visions, witcheries, and incantations he alone, with no less magic power, rendered probable, awful, and interesting. In short, so great and original were his powers, that he seems to be one who would have discovered the art had it never before existed.

Rembrandt, with all his powers, is a master whom it is most exceedingly dangerous to imitate; his excellencies are

so fascinating, that we are apt first to forgive, and, lastly, to fall in love even with his faults, or, at least, to think the former cheaply purchased with the incumbrance of the latter. But let the student carefully remember, that the imitator of any individual master, like the imitator of individual nature, must never hope to occupy a station in the first class of artists; and that defects like those of Rembrandt, and most of the Dutch school, even if associated with equal excellence, can never hope to be forgiven a second time.*

Lecture IV. — On Colouring.

I shall this evening proceed to the consideration of Colouring, the third part of painting, which, though confessedly of inferior consequence to design and chiaroscuro, must yet be deemed sufficiently important to occupy a large share of the attention of an artist who wishes to give a correct and an agreeable representation of nature. Hence it may be thought necessary, that he should study the laws of optics, be intimately acquainted with all the phenomena of reflection and refraction of light, of its composition and divisibility into red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, and violet-coloured rays, and that he should examine into the nature of the surfaces and textures of different bodies, by which they absorb, divide, transmit, or reflect light, and consequently give birth to that astonishing variety of hues, under which they are exhibited to the eye.

These are studies which, doubtless, ought not to be altogether discouraged; for, not to speak of the pleasure that must result to the artist, from his being able truly and solidly to account for all the various appearances of light, he cannot, of course, be too well acquainted with the nature and properties of those colours, by whose instrumentality he is to

* Rembrandt is, without doubt, the greatest master of chiaroscuro that has yet appeared; he accomplished a perfect union of light and shade and colour, the only true elements of chiaroscuro. This subject is discussed at length in the *Epochs of Painting* already referred to, chapter xxxi.—W.

give life and energy to his future designs. But it cannot be improper to inform him, that too much stress may easily be laid on knowledge of this kind; Titian, Rubens, and Vandyck probably knew nothing of the divisibility of light, and little more, perhaps, of the laws of optics, than what must necessarily result from practice; and it must reluctantly be confessed, that the rest is but remotely connected with the art, and that the discoveries of Newton and Berkeley, however sublime and beautiful, are but little calculated to assist the production of the sublime and beautiful in painting.

If poets, of all times, have considered colour as one of the chief beauties in nature, it can be no wonder that painters should delight in it, and be too often inclined to overrate its importance. From a conviction of this general tendency it is, that the united voices of all teachers are lifted against the fascinating charms of this Cleopatra of the art, for which hundreds "have lost the world, and been content to lose it."

Colouring, says a great critic, if once attained in a high degree, generally disdains subordination, and engrosses the whole attention. Those who have once gained supreme dominion over the eye will hardly resign it to court the more coy approbation of the mind — the approbation of a few, opposed to the admiration of all! Poussin thinks that colouring needs little attention, and that practice alone will give a reasonable proficiency in it. Annibale Carracci delivered it as his opinion, that almost the whole art consisted in a good outline; and Sir Joshua Reynolds, the slave and master of colouring, to gain which he almost lost himself, though sedulously devoted to it in practice, seems, in his writings, to consider it as rather detrimental, if not incompatible with sentiment and the grand style of art.

The judgments of those who have failed in their attempts to colour, like the fox's judgment in grapes, may reasonably be suspected of proceeding from sinister motives; but the judgment of him, who, from his superlative excellence in that branch might boldly challenge comparison with the greatest masters, claims to be considered with all possible respect and attention. It is not, therefore, without some alarm, that I feel myself compelled to oppose his opinion, which to me appears not to be founded on a clear perception of any thing in the nature of colouring, repugnant to expression, cha-

racter, and sentiment, but rather drawn from the flagrant abuse of it by the Venetian and Flemish painters, and a supposition that the deficiency of it in the works of the Romans and Florentines was not owing to incapacity, but to their rejection of its blandishments, on a conviction of their interfering with, or destroying the effect of those excellencies, to which they were more immediately desirous of paying attention. This is so far from being the case, that Michelangelo, it is well known, was exceedingly charmed by Titian's colouring, and very solicitous of joining, through the means of Sebastian del Piombo, the Venetian manner of painting to his own grand style of design; and Raphael, who panted after perfection, put himself under Fra Bartolomeo for the express purpose of studying colouring, wishing to add to his already magnificent *stock of merits* all those necessary to produce that *truth* and *illusion*, so agreeable in the works of many comparatively inferior *masters*. Hence I am convinced, that, far from considering it as detrimental, they thought it indispensable to perfection. And the authority of the ancients, which, in regard to matters of taste, must be considered as little short of revelation, is also evidently in favour of this opinion, since we find that, amongst the Greeks, Zeuxis, Parrhasius, and Apelles, their most famous painters, were also the most excellent colourists; and, if we examine the inordinate praises bestowed on the last and greatest of the three, it will be found to turn chiefly on the beauty of his colouring; the famous Coan Venus, painted by him, was the admiration of every succeeding age, till the time of Cicero, who marks its perfection in colour as approaching the truth, softness, and warmth of real flesh and blood.* The same artist, after this, attempted a second Venus, which was to have exceeded all his former productions; but dying before he had executed more than the head and breasts, no painter, we are told (such was its superlative excellence), could be prevailed on to attempt its completion.

* He says (*De Nat. Deor.* i. 27), the tints of the Venus Anadyomene are not blood, but a resemblance of blood. This celebrated picture was taken from the Coans by Augustus, in lieu of 100 talents tribute: it was injured in the passage to Rome, and was so much decayed in the time of Nero, that a copy of it, by one Dorotheus, was substituted for it in the temple of Julius Cæsar, by that emperor.—W.

Now, as we must suppose, in this case, that the idea, character, and style of design were determined, it seems to follow, that what the artists dreaded in particular was a comparison of their *colouring* with the truly inimitable beauty of his. Pliny, also, tells us of a Warrior painted by him, which challenged nature itself; and Propertius pays him a most elegant compliment, and at the same time gives us the most perfect notion of his extraordinary merit, when, dissuading his mistress from the use of paint, he advises her to trust to her real complexion, which he compares to the native carnations of Apelles. By the great praises lavished on the colouring of Apelles, it must not be inferred that he was deficient in other parts of the art; the age in which he lived was distinguished above all others, which preceded or came after it, for the utmost perfection in design. A weakness, therefore, of the first painter, in the first branch of the art, could not possibly have been passed over unnoticed and uncensured. There is, indeed, the best reason for supposing him, in nearly all parts of the art, equal, and, in most, superior to any artist of his time. His character, therefore, may very properly be recommended to the consideration of those sanguine admirers of the Florentine and Roman schools, those greensick lovers of chalk, brickdust, charcoal, and old tapestry, who are so ready to decry the merits of colouring, and to set it down as a kind of superfluity in art.

The grand style consists, not in neglecting to give all the apparent truth, force, and reality of objects to the eye, but in supplying the defects, and avoiding the redundancies of individual and imperfect forms; and colouring is not less capable, by rejecting what is merely accidental, and copying only the general and characteristic hue of each object, of being elevated to the same ideal standard. By this simple and refined principle, operating equally in all parts of the art, the ancients carried it at last to such perfection, that nature "toiled after it in vain." Propertius, as we see by the foregoing compliment, made it a merit in her to rise to a competition with painting, in respect to colour; and the poets and orators, when they wished to give the highest possible idea of personal beauty, always had recourse for a comparison to the works of the statuary. Thus Ovid, speak-

ing of Cyllarus, the fairest of the Centaurs, celebrates him as vying in perfection with the most admirable statues:

> " A pleasing vigour his fair face express'd;
> His neck, his hands, his shoulders and his breast
> Did next in gracefulness and beauty stand
> To breathing figures of the sculptor's hand."

For these reasons, though no one can be a greater admirer, I might say adorer, of the works of Michelangelo and Raphael than myself, I confess I can no longer consider them as improved by defect: I will not believe that

> " Half their beauties to their spots we owe."

But, great as they were in design, invention, and expression, as colouring is capable of a corresponding elevation of character, and has often been made equally a vehicle of sentiment, I cannot but suppose that their merits would have been considerably augmented by the addition of beautiful and appropriate colour.*

But, in thus protesting against the neglect of colouring, I would by no means be considered as giving a sanction to the abuse of it. Let me, therefore, caution the student against that vulgar error, the mistaking fine colours for fine colouring, which consists, not in the gaudiness, but the truth, harmony, and transparency of the tints, and the depth of the tones. Let him beware of being captivated by the ostentatious splendour of the Venetian and Flemish schools: the terrors of the Crucifixion must not be lost in the magnificent pomp of a triumphal show, nor the pathetic solemnity of the Last Supper be disturbed by the impertinent gaiety of a bacchanalian revel. This is abhorrent to true taste; nor shall the authors of such mockeries escape censure, however great their powers or celebrated their names.†

* The frescoes of Raphael and Michelangelo in the Vatican are generally considered to be not only appropriately but *well* coloured; and they are certainly coloured in a style best suited to their subjects and treatment.—W.

† Exactly; and this censure would have been merited by Michelangelo and Raphael had their frescoes been coloured in the gay tints of the Venetians, or, indeed, had they given any greater prominence to colour than these works doubtless displayed in their former and uninjured state.—W.

Colour, the peculiar object of the most delightful of our senses, is associated in our minds with all that is rare, precious, delicate, and magnificent in nature. A fine complexion, in the language of the poet, is the dye of love, a hint of something celestial: the ruby, the rose, the diamond, the youthful blush, the orient morning, and the variegated splendour of the setting sun, consist of, or owe their charms principally to colour. To the sight it is the index of gaiety, richness, warmth, and animation; and should the most experienced artist, by design alone, attempt to represent the tender freshness of spring, the fervid vivacity of summer, or the mellow abundance of autumn, what must be his success? Colouring is the sunshine of the art, that clothes poverty in smiles, and renders the prospect of barrenness itself agreeable, while it heightens the interest, and doubles the charms of beauty.

However proper, therefore, it may be to place colouring in a subordinate rank to design, when we consider its various beauties, uses, and effects in the art, it will be found no easy task to do it justice. He that would excel in it must study it in several points of view, — in respect to the whole and in respect to the parts of a picture, in respect to mind and in respect to body, and in regard to itself alone. Like sound in poetry, colouring in painting should always be an echo to the sense. The true colourist, therefore, will always, in the first place, consider the nature of his subject, whether grave or gay, magnificent or melancholy, heroic or common; and, according to the time and place, whether his scene be intended to represent day or night, sunshine or gloom, a cavern, a prison, a palace, or the open air, such will be the predominant hues of his piece. Colour must also be employed to harmonise, invigorate, soften, and aid his chiaroscuro, in giving shape and unity to the masses of brightness and obscurity necessary to bring out a striking and an agreeable general effect, and in distinguishing by their depth, strength, or brilliancy, the principal and subordinate figures, groups, and actions of the piece, each in its proper degree; by which the eye is enabled to rest undisturbed on any separate part, to travel undistracted over each in succession, or, by fixing at once on the principal object, to enjoy the full and united impression of the whole.

In regard to the parts of a picture, it will not only be necessary that every individual object should properly co-operate in the general effect, but that each should likewise be properly distinguished from all others. It will be useful to the artist, therefore, to study the associations of colour with our ideas of character. *White*, the symbol of innocence, and the tender tints of spring analogous to the opening of human life, become the proper decoration and accompaniment of childhood and youth; greater strength and vivacity of colour suit a riper age; and thus, advancing through every gradation of richness and depth, till we come to "*black, staid wisdom's hue*," every actor that enters on his scene,—the young, the old, the male, the female, the slave, the hero, the magistrate, the prince, and the philosopher; in short, all stages of humanity, from the infant mewling in his nurse's arms to the decrepitude of second childishness,—will derive from the freshness, brilliancy, harmony, force, gravity, or sombreness of his tints, its characteristic colour and shade of difference, both in regard to complexion and dress, the essence and the accident.

Colour not only pleases by its thousand delicate hues and harmonious gradations, but serves in nature, and must be employed in art, to characterise and distinguish the various qualities and textures of different bodies and surfaces, as the tenderness and warmth of flesh, the hardness of stone, the polish of metals, the richness of velvet, and the transparency of glass, in all their varied situations of light, shade, or reflected light, and of proximity to, or distance from, the eye. Nor is its operation merely physical, and confined to body: every passion and affection of the human mind has its appropriate *tint*, and colouring, if properly adapted, lends its aid, with powerful effect, in the just discrimination and forcible expression of them; it heightens joy, warms love, inflames anger, deepens sadness, and adds coldness to the cheek of death itself.

The arrangement of colours, another important point, must be regulated by laws similar to those laid down respecting the management of light and shadow; they should each have a principal, and a few other subordinate masses of unequal sizes and irregular shapes, unless the subject expressly demands the contrary. This will be following the common

course of nature, which always tends to variety, inequality, and irregularity, except there is some specific purpose to be answered by a different mode of arrangement. It will also be found to correspond with the practice of the most approved masters in colouring; and those who are much conversant with pictures will easily recollect instances, where the painter having been under the necessity of laying in one place a large mass of a particular colour, has, by the introduction of bunches of flowers, pieces of drapery, or other objects, contrived to disseminate smaller masses of a similar colour in other parts of the picture, to keep up a due balance and harmony throughout the whole.

He that has attended to all this has done much, but much yet remains to be done. It has often been remarked, that colours are to the eye what flavours are to the palate and sounds to the *ear;* and, as music should not only be well composed, and played in time and in tune, but the tones also of the voices and instruments should be touching and agreeable; so, in painting, the colours should not only be applied properly, and arranged with judgment and taste, but they should also be capable of affording pleasure by their own intrinsic beauty, by their brilliancy, freshness, harmony, and transparency; these constitute the essence and requisite flavour of colouring; and, though many painters are unquestionably highly censurable for the absurdities and improprieties into which they have run to *gain* them, it cannot be denied that they ought to obtain in all subjects, in order to render the imitation of nature complete, and perfectly agreeable.

Colour being, exclusively and solely, an object of sight, must obviously be less under the power of language than almost any other part of the art. The student, however, may be told that the freshness and brilliancy of colours depend, in a great measure, on their purity, that is, on keeping them as little mixed together, as little muddled by vehicles and subsequent attempts to mend the first touches, as the power of the artist and the nature of the subject will admit of; and the brilliancy may be still further increased, by judiciously contrasting them with their opposites. Red, for instance, will have a more lively effect in the neighbourhood of blue; and yellow, opposed to purple.* White will increase

* This is somewhat contrary to the teachings of science: colours to be

in vivacity by being near black, and black will appear more intense, if placed on a ground of white. Laying them also in situations admitting of instantaneous comparison is another mode of heightening the apparent vivacity of colours. The ill-looking may appear well-favoured, if accompanied by those that are worse: thus a moderately lively red, or yellow, will appear brilliant, if surrounded by others of the same class, but of a more depraved quality. Richness and transparency may be obtained by glazing, and passing the colours one over another without suffering them to mix; and harmony is secured by keeping up the same tone through the whole, and not at all by any sort of arrangement, as some have erroneously supposed.† These circumstances will be plain and intelligible to all who are a little initiated in the theory and management of colours; but they will also find, to their sorrow, that brilliancy and freshness may easily be pushed into rawness and crudeness; that transparency may easily degenerate into flimsiness and want of solidity; that harmony easily slides into jaundice and muddiness; that spirit and cleanness of touch quickly run into hardness, and softness into woolliness and want of precision; and, between these almost meeting extremes, who shall tell them when and where to stop? This is altogether beyond the power of words, and is attainable only by a good organ, long practice, and the study of nature and the best masters.

In studying and copying the works of old and celebrated masters, it is proper, however, that the student should never lose sight of one circumstance, *which is*, that they are often, if not always, so changed by time, dust, and varnish, that it is necessary to consider, rather what they once were, than what they are at present. He must acquire the power

made as effective as possible must be opposed to their complements: thus red is opposed to *green* (blue and yellow); blue to orange (red and yellow); and yellow to purple (blue and red). And two of the secondary colours harmonise beautifully, on the same principle.—W.

† Science and feeling, if the subject were properly illustrated, would soon teach us that this is not an erroneous supposition. *Tints* are materially changed by *toning*; it amounts, therefore, to *arrangement* after all: of course many arrangements of colours would suit equally well, but the tints must be of corresponding absorptive powers, and this is arrangement. On this subject see the works already cited: Brewster's *Optics*, Goethe's *Theory of Colours*, and Field's *Chromatography*.—W.

of seeing the brilliancy of their tints through the cloud by which it is obscured; otherwise he will be likely to imbibe false notions on the subject, and become a colourist of his own formation, with ideas equally remote from nature and from art, from the genuine practice of the masters, and the real appearances of things. It would be as tedious as useless to enter here into a detail of the various materials used in painting, and the different modes of applying them, the proper knowledge of which it is the province of experiment and practice alone to teach. Suffice it to say, that the genuine principles of colouring are the same in all, and that, under skilful management, they are all capable of producing admirable effects; but, though every student may safely be left to his own choice of his vehicles and instruments, it is highly necessary to caution him against any undue reliance on them, and to remark that much imposition and quackery has, at all times, prevailed in respect to this comparatively insignificant part of the art.

Not long since we were astonished by the proposals of a very young lady, scarce in her teens, for unveiling her Venetian secret, and teaching Royal Academicians to colour, at five guineas a head, by which young and old, learned and unlearned, were equally captivated, and the grave biographer of our illustrious first president so dazzled, as to lament most piteously that great man's misfortune, in being cut off before he had had an opportunity of purchasing her inestimable and cheaply proffered favours. At another time, still more wonderful recipes are announced for making Titians and Correggios by a chemical process, and every day some new graphic Dr. Graham or Brodum, with a confidence that stupifies common sense, and dares incredulity to silence, bursts upon us, and boasts the infallibility of his nostrums for producing fine pictures without the help of science, genius, taste, or industry. Oil, water, varnish, gums, wool, worsted, pokers, chalk, charcoal, and brick-dust, have each their several champions, who triumph and fall by turns: —

> "Thus have I seen, engaged in mortal fight,
> A sturdy barber beat a collier white;
> In comes the brickdust-man with grime bespread,
> And beats the collier and the barber red."

All which might well be laughed at, if it had not the mischievous effect of diverting the student's attention from the end to the means, disposing him to the worst kind of idleness, and filling his head with a farrago, as pernicious and nugatory as the pursuit of the philosopher's stone, or the perpetual motion; and as little connected with the real essence of painting as writing with red or black ink, or upon crown, double elephant, or foolscap paper, is with that of poetry.

Sir Joshua Reynolds, in his admirable Discourses, seems particularly anxious to guard the young practitioner against such vain pretenders and wonder-mongers, by exposing the danger of his fancying the art to consist of any thing like the tricks of a juggler, or imagining that excellence is to be obtained any otherwise than by incessant practice and well-directed study. "Labour," says he, quoting from the ancients, "is the price which the gods have set upon every thing truly valuable."

In allusion to the uses and effects of colouring, when applied properly, that is, in assistance, and not to the exclusion, of other excellencies, Fresnoy not improperly calls it the handmaid of her sister Design, for whom she procures lovers by dressing, painting, ornamenting, and making her appear more bewitching than she naturally is; and thus, as Dryden observes in his parallel betwixt Poetry and Painting, it is the versification, tropes, figures, and other elegancies of language and expression, *the colouring of poetry*, that charm the reader and beautify the fable or design; but, in both arts, if the latter be mean or vicious, the cost of language and colouring will be wholly thrown away, like a rich habit, jewels, and other finery, on an ordinary woman, which, instead of rendering her charming, only tend to illuminate and draw her defects more strongly into notice, making what was in itself bad appear ten times worse by comparison.

Colouring being to superficial observers one half of painting, and that the most attractive, it has, perhaps, in all parts of the world, been nearly coeval with design. The Florentine artists studied and practised it from the earliest time, but apparently with a success by no means answerable to their efforts. Ignorant of the principles of chiaroscuro, their utmost exertions could never have enabled them to do

more than rival the king of diamonds. It is unnecessary, therefore, to trace the history of colouring further back than the latter end of the fifteenth century, when its true birth seems to have taken place at Venice; at least, there the rudiments of all that makes it valuable and agreeable appear to have been invented by Giorgione, of whom I have spoken in a former lecture, and there they were first successfully cultivated and brought to perfection by Titiano da Cador.*

Without meaning to detract any thing from the unquestionable merits of these great men, I cannot but observe that this extraordinary change and improvement in the style of colouring must, in part, also, have been owing to the introduction of oil-painting from Flanders, which took place about the period mentioned, and in time entirely superseded the more ancient practice of painting in fresco or water-colours; a method which, notwithstanding some advantages in respect to freshness and facility, totally precludes the possibility of producing the depth of tone, transparency, force, mellowness, and finish, attainable by painting in oil.†

Titian, whose name, like that of Apelles of old, is now synonymous with all that is exquisite in colour, was born about the year 1480‡, and discovering at an early age a strong propensity to painting, was placed, when ten or eleven years old, under the tuition of Gian. Bellini, at that time a painter of eminence at Venice, but whose stiff, ungraceful style of design, and flat, meagre manner of colouring, were little calculated to develop and forward the first-rate powers of his pupil. Happily, however, about the year 1507, Giorgione, being arrived at Venice from Florence and Leonardo

* It was rather the union of chiaroscuro with colour that was perfected to a great degree by Giorgione and Titian. Colouring is one of the distinctive characteristics of the school of Murano. The Vivarini, Giovanni Bellini, and others, were excellent colourists in one sense—that is, for the depth and purity of their tints.—W.

† This probably depends greatly upon the skill of the operator, though brilliancy, doubtless, is much more easily attained in oil colours than in water colours. Oil painting, or more correctly *varnish-painting*, which the method of the Van Eycks was, was introduced into Italy about 1455, ten years after the death of John Van Eyck.—W.

‡ Titian was born in 1477, at Capo del Cadore, and died of the plague at Venice in 1576. Cadorin, *Dello Amore ai Veneziani di Tiziano Vecellio*, Ven. 1833.—W.

da Vinci*, Titian was so warmed and captivated by the unusual boldness and richness of his style, that, immediately turning out of doors all that he had learned in the school of Bellini, he began afresh; and such was the assiduity with which he applied himself to the study and practice of the new manner, that, from the humble imitator, he very soon became the successful rival of Giorgione, — nay more, his master; for being employed jointly with Giorgione in the decoration of a palace at Venice, the latter was complimented by his friends, who were ignorant of the partnership, on the part that was painted by Titian, in which they told him he had perfectly outdone himself. This unlucky praise so shocked Giorgione, that, leaving the work unfinished, he for some days hid himself in his house, and from that time forswore all friendship and acquaintance with Titian, who, in the sequel, seems to have excelled Giorgione as much in jealousy as in painting; for he is said, some years afterwards, to have barricaded his doors against Paris Bordone, from very ill-founded fears of experiencing from that painter the same disagreeable effects which Giorgione had felt from him.

Like Michelangelo in design, Titian, in colouring, may be regarded as the father of modern art. He first discovered and unfolded all its charms, saw the true end of imitation, showed what to aim at, when to labour, and where to stop; and *united breadth and softness* to the *proper degree of finishing*. He first dared all its depths, contrasted all its oppositions, and taught colour to glow and palpitate with all the warmth, and *tenderness of real life:* free from tiresome detail, or disgusting minutiæ, he rendered the roses and lilies of youth, the more ensanguined brown of manhood, and the pallid coldness of age, with truth and precision; and to every material object, hard or soft, rough or smooth, bright or obscure, opaque or transparent, his pencil imparted its true quality and appearance to the eye, with all the force and harmony of light, shade, middle tint, and reflexion, by which he so relieved, rounded, and connected the whole, that we are

* This is an error; at least there is no evidence of Giorgione's ever having visited Florence, or seen Leonardo da Vinci. It is a mere surmise that he ever saw any of the works of Da Vinci. — W.

almost irresistibly tempted to apply the test of another sense, and exclaim,

> " Art thou not, pleasing vision! sensible
> To feeling as to sight?"

Though gifted with a perfect knowledge of all the qualities and powers of colour, he never overstepped the modesty of nature, and made that ostentatious and meretricious use of it so censurable in many of his followers. In his works, it is modest without heaviness, rich without glaring, and transparent without flimsiness: like a great orator, he never sacrifices the end to the means, subjugates sense to sound, or diverts the attention of the spectator from the subject to himself.

At an early period he mounted the throne of portrait-painting, where, in the opinion of many, he still keeps his seat, unshaken, notwithstanding the violent attacks made on him at different periods by Vandyck, Rembrandt, and Reynolds. He combines resemblance with dignity, *costume* with taste, and art with simplicity; and equally delights the physiognomist, the artist, the antiquary, and the connoisseur. He was the inventor of all that is simple and captivating, or sublime and energetic, in landscape; and, in short, his powers changed the whole appearance, and still continued to influence the style of modern colouring; — for where is the painter, since his time, who has been exempted by grandeur or littleness, by genius or stupidity, from the necessity of imitating the works of Titian? To him we are, in some measure, indebted for the daring vivacity of Tintoretto, the freshness of Veronese, the strength of Carracci*, the glowing splendour of Rubens, the truth of Rembrandt, and the taste of Vandyck. Justly, therefore, was it said of him by Michelangelo, that, had he been a correct designer, he would have been the first painter that ever existed.†

Titian, like his contemporaries, began his career by merely

* Lodovico?—W.

† Michelangelo visited Titian with Vasari, when Titian was engaged in the Belvedere on his picture of Danae, in the year 1545. When they left, Michelangelo, after praising Titian's colouring and execution, said— " If Titian had been as much assisted by art as he is by nature, nothing could surpass him," alluding to his inferior style of design. — W.

copying nature, as she happened to present herself, without choice or selection, and laboured for a time in the labyrinth of littleness, meanness, and deformity; but a hint from Giorgione soon taught him that taste was as requisite as industry, that labour might be misapplied, and truth itself become uninteresting, unnatural, and disgusting; that hairs, pores, pimples, warts, stains, freckles, and all the train of nauseous minutiæ, on which inferior artists waste their puny powers, are incompatible with the true end of imitation; that the detail must be sunk in the essential and predominant qualities of bodies; and that the business of painting, like that of poetry, is not to give a feeble catalogue of particulars, but a characteristic, comprehensive, and animated impression of the whole. By the operation of this principle, extended from the parts to the individual, from the individual to the group, and thence to the entire mass of his composition, he reached the last and greatest excellence of colouring, — that of giving the ruling passion or sentiment of his subject in the prevailing tone or predominant hue of his piece.

From Titian we may learn what may be usefully applied, not only to ourselves, but to men in all situations and of all professions, as well as to painters — that *it is never too late to improve;* for, at the age of seventy, and considerably upwards, we find him still rapidly advancing in his art. He had, it is true, at an early period, acquired breadth and grandeur in respect to colour, but he was not so happy as to burst the shackles of meanness, and emancipate himself from littleness, in respect to design, character, and invention, till very late in life. All obstacles, however, at length gave way to his powers and perseverance, and his latter works are not only remarkable for the most truly historic and awful tones of colour, for a freedom and felicity of execution beyond even the great promise of his former time, but also for a picturesque boldness and sublimity of conception, and energy of action and expression, and a learned and grand style of design, second to none but Michelangelo. Those, therefore, who have seen the majestic figure of his Abraham about to offer up Isaac, his Cain and Abel, his David adoring over the headless trunk of Goliath, and his astonishing picture of the Death of Peter the Martyr, in which there is very

nearly a complete union of all the excellencies of the art, will judge of the infinite importance of appropriate colour and execution to design, and be ready to cry out, with a certain critic, that "if Titian was not the greatest painter, he certainly produced the best pictures in the world."* Nature and fortune were equally kind to Titian: he had not to complain of having fallen on evil days and evil tongues; he was not suffered to waste his sweetness on the desert air; his works, sought for with avidity even in his lifetime, made their way, without the aid of time, dust, or varnish,—unscraped, unmended, and unsmoked,—into the halls of the opulent, the palaces of the great, and the temples of the Deity; and, what is still more extraordinary, he was himself not forbidden to accompany them; his fame as a portrait-painter procured him pressing invitations to attend every principal court in Europe, all being desirous to be delivered down to posterity, or, as it was forcibly expressed by Charles V., of being rendered immortal by the hand of Titian. He several times painted the portrait of that emperor, and once, it is said, whilst at work, having dropped a pencil, Charles stooped for it, gave it him, and, on Titian apologising with some confusion, said very courteously, "*Titian is worthy of being served by an emperor.*"† Charles also conferred on him the dignities of a knight, and count palatine, and allowed him a liberal pension; at which finding his courtiers beginning to express their envy and dissatisfaction, he plainly told them, as a reason for his bounty, and to mortify their malice, that he could, at any time, make as many nobles as

* A few dates of celebrated pictures are here given, that the student may not be misled by the above remarks, which require some modification. Though Titian produced some of his master-pieces after the age of seventy, the majority were painted long before that period. The Bacchus and Ariadne, in the National Gallery, was painted in 1514; the Assumption of the Virgin, in the academy at Venice, in 1516; the St. Peter Martyr, in 1528; and the Abraham and Isaac, Cain and Abel, &c. in 1541. The Martyrdom of San Lorenzo, painted for Philip II., is the greatest work of his later years. Opie's eulogy of the works of later years strangely contrasts with the "vicious extreme" of bravura, and the "dashing and slobbering," of which Barry, perhaps not unjustly, accuses him. — W.

† "E degno Tiziano essere servito da Cesare." By Cæsar, that is, by the emperor. — W.

he pleased, but that, with all his power, he could never make a Titian.

Thus honoured by the great, and his society courted by all the eminent men of his time, Titian was not more happy in his genius than in all the circumstances of his life, which, prolonged to an almost patriarchal extent, in uninterrupted health, and with little abatement of vigour, was brought at last to a period by the plague, at the end of ninety-nine years.

Of the numerous followers of Titian, the principal names are those of Tintoretto, and Paolo Veronese, who possessed the full powers of their master, perhaps even greater, in execution and colouring, but who fall infinitely beneath him in judgment and delicacy of taste. "Of all the extraordinary geniuses," says Vasari, "who have practised the art of painting, for wild, capricious, extravagant, and fantastical inventions, for furious impetuosity and boldness in the execution of his works, there is none like Tintoretto; his strange whimsies are even beyond extravagance, and his works seem to be produced rather by chance than in consequence of any previous design, as if he wanted to convince the world that the art was a trifle of the most easy attainment."* This criticism, though much too violent and severe in the main, as might be expected from a Florentine biographer, is not wholly inapplicable to all the Venetian painters, Titian alone excepted; for, in their works, it cannot be denied that we look in vain for that depth of thought, and those comprehensive and elevated views of nature, which dignify the productions of Rome and Florence; their subjects are, in general, treated without regard to propriety of character, historic truth, or the decorum and simplicity due to sacred and allegoric representation; and it is evident they considered the art as consisting of little more than those second-rate excellencies, which so eminently characterise their own school. Hence their grandest compositions seldom offer us anything but important events disgraced by mean and uncharacteristic agents, and vulgarised by the introduction of puerile and ridiculous circumstances:

"What should be great they turn to farce!"

* Compare Sir Joshua Reynolds's Fourth Discourse, *note*.—W.

Everything appears to be burlesqued — put in the wrong place or called by a wrong name. We have portrait for history — Turks' heads for Apostles' — and Jews for Pagans. Fat, smirking damsels (the painters' mistresses or those of their friends) flaunting and bridling in all the tawdry dresses and fashionable airs of the time, are indiscriminately christened *Holy Virgins*, *Pharaoh's daughters*, *Judiths*, *Rebeccas*, and *Cleopatras;* and *black* boys, *dwarfs*, *dogs* gnawing bones, cats, and monkeys, are not seldom obtruded on the spectator, on the most solemn occasions, as the principal objects in the piece!!!

> "The things we know are neither rich nor rare,
> But wonder how the devil they got there!"

With all these defects, such are the powers displayed in their works, that many of those of a confessedly higher character would suffer considerably by being brought into comparison with them. It is to no purpose that we know this effect ought not to take place; the eye is enthralled, and the understanding struggles in vain against the glowing harmony of their colouring, the illusive vivacity of their imagery, and the sweeping rapidity of their execution, which, like the force of eloquence, bear down all before them, and often triumph over superior learning and truth.

But though their style, in general, was properly calculated only for occasions of gaiety, frivolity, and magnificence, they were not always unsuccessful in subjects of the grand and tragic kind. In the famous picture of the Crucifixion, by Tintoretto, *the ominous, terrific, and ensanguined hue of the whole*, THE DISASTROUS TWILIGHT, that indicates some *more* than mortal suffering, electrifies the spectator at the first glance, and is such an instance of the powerful application of colouring to expression as has probably never been exceeded, except by Rembrandt, in the bloodless, heart-appalling hue, spread over his Belshazzar's Vision of the Hand-writing on the Wall.*

Built on the same principles, and partaking of the same beauties and defects as the Venetian, the Flemish school next demands our attention in regard to colouring; in which, if it is inferior to the former in depth, richness, and fresh-

* In the possession of the Earl of Derby. — W.

ness, it is superior in vivacity, splendour, and transparency; if it yields in individual truth, it goes beyond in general harmony. In the Venetian, there is perhaps more strength, —in the Flemish, more softness: the one may be said to give us the tints of autumn, and the other those of spring or summer.

Peter Paul Rubens, the great luminary and centre of the Flemish system of art, was of a distinguished family at Antwerp, at that time a school of classical and religious learning, and the emporium of the western world. Here, from his infancy, he was educated, with great care, in every branch of polite literature; and his genius met these advantages with an ardour and success, of which the ordinary course of things furnishes us with no parallel. At the age of nineteen he seriously applied himself to painting under the tuition of Otho Venius, and, a very few years afterwards, we find him in Italy, possessed of unbounded powers, both in the theory and practice of his art, and working more as the rival than the pupil of those masters, whose works had been selected as the objects of his imitation.*

Both the number and merits of the works of Rubens, as well as his uncommon success in life, are calculated to excite extraordinary attention: his fame is extended over a large part of the continent without a rival; and it may truly be said, that he has enriched his country, not only by the *magnificent examples of art* which he left, but also by what some may deem a more solid advantage, the wealth which continued, till lately, to be drawn into it by the concourse of strangers from all parts of the world to view them.†

To the city of Düsseldorf he has been an equal benefactor,

* Rubens was born at Cologne, June 29. 1577; his parents were natives of Antwerp, whither Rubens was taken by his mother, after the death of her husband, in 1587. Rubens went to Italy in 1600, visited Spain in 1605, and returned to Antwerp in 1608. In 1620 he visited Paris, paid a second visit to Spain in 1628, and came, in 1629, to England, where he was knighted by Charles in the following year. He died at Antwerp, May 30. 1640. — W.

† The concourse of strangers to Antwerp, where the works of Rubens are still, perhaps, the visitor's greatest attraction, is still unabated. In 1840, the second centennial anniversary of his death, a colossal statue of the painter, in bronze, was placed, with great ceremony, in the centre of the Place Verte. — W.

as the gallery there would at least lose half its value, were his performances alone to be withdrawn from it.* Paris, also, owes to him a large part of its attractions; and, if to these we add the many towns, churches, and private cabinets whereon a single picture or sketch of Rubens often confers distinction, who shall dispute his legitimate claim to be ranked with the most illustrious names in his profession?

Rubens is not one of those regular and timid composers, who escape censure and deserve no praise. He produces no faultless monsters; his works abound with defects, as well as beauties, and are liable, by their daring eccentricities, to provoke much criticism. But they have, nevertheless, that peculiar property, always the companion of true genius, that which seizes on the spectator, commands attention, and enforces admiration in spite of all their faults. "To the want of this fascinating power" (says Sir Joshua Reynolds, in his Journey through Flanders), "it is owing, that the performances of those painters, by which he is surrounded, such as the altar-pieces of Crayer, Schut, Segers, Huysum, Tyssens, Van Balen, and others, though they have, perhaps, fewer defects, appear spiritless and insipid in comparison: they are men, whose hands, and indeed all their faculties, appear to be cabined, cribbed, confined; and their performances, however tolerable in some respects, are too evidently the effect of merely careful and laborious diligence.

"The productions of Rubens, on the contrary, seem to flow from his pencil with more than freedom, with *prodigality;* his mind was inexhaustible, his hand was never wearied; the exuberant fertility of his imagination was, therefore, always accompanied by a correspondent spirit in the execution of his work:—

> 'Led by some rule which guides but not constrains,
> He finish'd more through happiness than pains.'"

No man ever more completely laid the reins on the neck of his inclinations, no man ever more fearlessly abandoned himself to his own sensations, and, depending on them, dared to attempt extraordinary things, than Rubens. To this, in a great measure, must be attributed that perfect ori-

* These pictures are now at Munich, whither the Düsseldorf collection was removed in 1808. — W.

ginality of manner, by which the limits of the art may be said to be extended. Endowed with a full comprehension of his own character, he waited not a moment for the acquisition of what he perhaps deemed incompatible excellence: his theory once formed, he seldom looked abroad for assistance; there is, consequently, in his works very little that appears to be taken from other masters, and, if he has occasionally stolen any thing, he has so well digested and adapted it to the rest of his composition, that the theft is not discoverable. But, though it must be allowed that he possessed, in many respects, the true art of imitation, though he looked at nature with a true painter's eye, and saw at once the characteristic feature by which every object is distinguished, and rendered it at once on canvas with a vivacity of touch truly astonishing; though his powers of grouping and combining his objects into a whole, and forming his masses of light and shade, and colour, have never been equalled; and though the general animation and energy of his attitudes, and the flowing liberty of his outline, all contribute to arrest the attention, and inspire a portion of that enthusiasm by which the painter was absorbed and carried away, yet the spectator will at last awake from the trance, his eyes will cease to be dazzled, and then he will not fail to lament, that such extraordinary powers were so often misapplied, if not entirely cast away; he will inquire why Rubens was content to want so many requisites to the perfection of art, why he paid no greater attention to elegance and correctness of form, to grace, beauty, dignity, and propriety of character, — why every subject, of whatever class, is equally adorned with the gay colours of spring, and every figure in his compositions indiscriminately *fed on roses*. Nor will he, I fear, be satisfied with the ingenious, but surely unfounded apology, that these faults harmonise with his style, and were necessary to its complete uniformity; that his taste in design appears to correspond better with his colouring and composition than if he had adopted a more correct and refined style of drawing; and that, perhaps, in painting, as in personal attractions, there is a certain agreement and correspondence of parts in the whole together, which is often more captivating than mere regular beauty.

Lest these remarks should be thought too severe on this

illustrious man, I shall extract from the works of the great critic, so often already quoted, his description of the picture of The Fallen Angels, by Rubens, now in the gallery at Düsseldorf: — "It is impossible," says Sir Joshua Reynolds, "without having seen this picture, to form an adequate idea of the powers of Rubens. He seems here to have given loose to the most capricious imagination in the attitudes and invention of the falling angels who are tumbling

> 'With hideous ruin and combustion, down
> To bottomless perdition.'

"If we consider the fruitfulness of invention discovered in this work, or the skill which is shown in composing such an infinite number of figures, or the art in the distribution of the light and shadow, the freedom and facility with which it seems to be performed, and, what is still more extraordinary, the correctness, and admirable taste of drawing of foreshortened figures in attitudes the most difficult to execute, we must pronounce this picture to be one of the greatest efforts of genius that ever the art of painting has produced."

His universality is another striking trait in the character of Rubens. In the smallest sketch, the lightness and transparency of his touch and colour are no less remarkable than the sweeping rapidity and force of his brush in his largest works; and, in all kinds of subjects, he equally keeps up his wonted superiority. His animals, particularly his lions and horses, are so admirable, that it may be said they were never properly, at least, poetically, painted but by him. His portraits rank with the best works of those painters who have made that branch of art their sole study; the same may be said of his landscapes: and, though Claude Lorrain finished more neatly, as became a professor in a particular branch, yet there is such an airiness and facility in the landscapes of Rubens, that a painter would as soon wish to be the author of them as of those of Claude, or any other artist whatever.*

Rubens, like Titian, was caressed, honoured, employed, and splendidly rewarded by several crowned heads, and even deputed in a ministerial capacity, by the king of Spain, to

* This paragraph is likewise from Sir Joshua Reynolds, with the exception of only a few verbal alterations. See the character of Rubens in the *Journey to Flanders and Holland.* — W.

make confidential overtures to the court of London, where he was knighted by Charles I., and had every possible mark of respect shown to him, on account of his unrivalled excellence in his profession. At his return to Flanders he was honoured with the post of secretary of state, and in that office he continued till his death, which was brought on by the gout, at the age of sixty-three. He is said to have shown the ruling passion strong in death, lamenting to be taken off just as he began to be able to paint, and understand his art.

He enjoyed his good fortune with equal liberality and prudence, searching out and employing such artists as possessed merit, and were in indigent circumstances; but when visited by a famous chemist, who told him he had nearly discovered the philosopher's stone, and wished him to become a partner in his good luck, Rubens, pointing to his palette and pencils, answered, he was come too late, for that, by the help of those instruments, he had himself found the philosopher's stone some twenty years before.

In comparing Rubens with Titian, it has been observed, that the latter mingled his tints as they are in nature, that is, in such a manner as makes it impossible to discover where they begin or terminate: Rubens' method, on the contrary, was to lay his colours in their places, one by the side of the other, and afterwards very slightly mix them by a touch of the pencil. Now, as it is an acknowledged principle in the art, that the less colours are mingled, the greater their purity and vivacity; and as every painter knows the latter method to be the most learned (requiring a deeper knowledge of the subject), to be attended with a greater facility, and, if properly managed, with greater truth and vivacity of effect, it must follow that this difference in their practice, which has been adduced to prove the inferiority of Rubens to Titian, indisputably proves the reverse; and though it must be allowed, perhaps, that, in practice, he at times uncovered too much the skeleton of his system, and rendered his tints too visible for a near inspection, I can have no doubt that, on the whole, he was the most profound theorist; that more may be learnt from him respecting the nature, use, and arrangement of colours, than from any other master; and that had he not been, in some measure, the dupe of his own

powers, his name would have stood first in the first rank of colourists.

Rubens, like other men of his degree of eminence, produced a multitude of scholars and imitators, to whom he stood in the place of nature, and whose excellence can only be measured by their proximity to, or distance from, their great archetype. The best of their works are now probably, and not improperly, attributed to him, from whose mind the principle that directed them emanated. From him they learned to weigh the powers of every colour, and balance the proportion of every tint; but, destitute of his vigorous imagination, the knowledge of his principle became, in their hands, a mere palliative of mental imbecility (leaves without trunk), and served only to lacquer over poverty of thought and feebleness of design, and to impart a sickly magnificence to stale mythological conceits, and clumsy forms of gods without dignity, goddesses without beauty, and heroes without energy; which disgust the more for the abortive attempt to conceal, by colouring, the want of that which colour can never supply.

Such will always be the success of exclusive endeavours to copy the manner of a particular individual, however great his powers or name. The proper use of the study of our predecessors is to open and enlarge the mind, facilitate our labours, and give us the result of the selection made by them of what is grand, beautiful, and striking in nature. A painter, therefore, ought to consider, compare, and weigh in the balance of reason the different styles of all distinguished masters; and, whatever mode of execution he may choose to adopt, his imitation should always be general, and directed only to what is truly excellent in each: he may follow the same road, but not tread in the same footsteps; otherwise, to borrow a metaphor from a celebrated artist of former days, instead of the child, he will be more likely to become the *grandchild* of nature.

THE

LECTURES OF HENRY FUSELI.

INTRODUCTION.

It cannot be considered as superfluous or assuming to present the reader of the following lectures with a succinct characteristic sketch of the principal technic instruction, ancient and modern, which we possess; I say a sketch, for an elaborate and methodical survey, or a plan well digested and strictly followed, would demand a volume. These observations, less written for the man of letters and cultivated taste than for the student who wishes to inform himself of the history and progress of his art, are to direct him to the sources from which my principles are deduced, to enable him, by comparing my authors with myself, to judge how far the theory which I deliver may be depended on as genuine, or ought to be rejected as erroneous or false.

The works, or fragments of works, which we possess, are either purely elementary, critically historical, biographic, or mixed up of all three. On the books purely elementary, the van of which is led by Leonardo da Vinci* and Albert Dürer†, and the rear by Gherard Lairesse‡, as the princi-

* *Trattato della Pittura.* Rome, 1817, 2 vols. 4to. —W.

† Albert Dürer is the author of a work on the proportions of the human frame — *Vier Bücher von Menschlicher Proportion* durch Albrechten Durer von Nürenberg erfunden und beschrieben, zu nutz allen denen, so zu diser kunst lieb tragen. Nürnberg, 1528. —W.

‡ *Het Groot Schilderboek.* 4to. Amsterdam, 1707. Many similar works have since appeared. It is half a century since these lectures were written. —W.

ples which they detail must be supposed to be already in the student's possession, or are occasionally interwoven with the topics of the lectures, I shall not expatiate, but immediately proceed to the historically critical writers; who consist of all the ancients yet remaining, Pausanias excepted.

We may thank destiny that, in the general wreck of ancient art, a sufficient number of entire and mutilated monuments have escaped the savage rage of barbarous conquest, and the still more savage hand of superstition, not only to prove that the principles which we deliver formed the body of ancient art, but to furnish us with their standard of style. For if we had nothing to rely on to prove its existence than the historic and critical information left us, such is the chaos of assertion and contradiction, such the chronologic confusion, and dissonance of dates, that nothing short of a miracle could guide us through the labyrinth, and the whole would assume a fabulous aspect. Add to this the occupation and character of the writers, none of them a professional man. For the rules of Parrhasius, the volumes of Pamphilus, Apelles, Metrodorus, all irrecoverably lost, we must rely on the hasty compilations of a warrior, or the incidental remarks of an orator, Pliny and Quintilian; Pliny, authoritative in his verdicts, a Roman in decision, was rather desirous of knowing much than of knowing well; the other, though, as appears, a man of exquisite taste, was too much occupied by his own art to allow our's more than a rapid glance. In Pliny* it is necessary, and for an artist not very difficult, to distinguish when he speaks from himself and when he delivers an extract, however short; whenever he does the first, he is seldom able to separate the kernel from the husk; he is credulous, irrelevant, ludicrous. The Jupiter of Phidias, the Doryphorus of Polycletus, the Aphrodite of Praxiteles, the Demos of Parrhasius, the Venus of Apelles, provoke his admiration in no greater degree than the cord drawn over the horns and muzzle of the bull in the group of Amphion, Zetus, and Antiope†; the spires and windings of

* The thirty-fifth book of the elder Pliny's *Natural History* contains a compendious sketch of the history of painting down to his own time Pliny was killed by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius which destroyed Pompeii and Herculaneum, on the 24th of August, 79 A. D. — W.

† In the group known as the Toro Farnese, at Naples. See note, *ante*, p. 172. — W.

the serpents in that of the Laocoon, the effect of the foam from the sponge of Protogenes, the partridge in his Jalysus, the grapes that imposed on the birds, and the curtain which deceived Zeuxis. Such is Pliny when he speaks from himself, or, perhaps, from the hints of some dilettante; but when he delivers an extract, his information is not only essential and important, but expressed by the most appropriate words. Such is his account of the glazing method of Apelles, in which, as Reynolds has observed, he speaks the language of an artist*; such is what he says of the manner in which Protogenes embodied his colours, though it may require the practice of an artist to penetrate his meaning. No sculptor could describe better in many words than he does in one, the manœuvre by which Nicias gave the decided line of correctness to the models of Praxiteles; the word *circumlitio*, shaping, rounding the moist clay with the finger, is evidently a term of art.† Thus, when he describes the method of

* Pliny simply states that Apelles glazed his pictures in a manner peculiar to himself; he covered them with a dark transparent varnish, which had the effect of toning down the colours, and, at the same time, increased the brilliancy of the shadows. — W.

† This *circumlitio* does not appear to be any particular term of art; it is Pliny's own expression, and is not given as a rendering of any particular expression by Praxiteles. Cicero uses the same word when speaking of the Persian custom of embalming their dead. Persæ mortuos *cera circumlitos* condunt (*In Tusc.* i. 45.). Pliny relates (xxxv. 40.) that Praxiteles, being asked which of his marble statues he preferred, answered, "those which Nicias had had a hand in;" so much did he attribute to his *circumlitio*. Here is, evidently, the question of a process which some marble statues have undergone under the hands of a painter — that is, Praxiteles preferred those statues which had been *coloured* by Nicias. Some of the statues of Praxiteles were left plain, and others were coloured, and the sculptor preferred the latter. There can be no doubt that the Greeks painted their marble statues; the statue painters are mentioned both by Plato (*De Republ.* iv. 420. c.) and by Plutarch (*De Glor. Athen.* 6.). They are termed by Plutarch, Ἀγαλμάτων ἐγκαυσται— *encaustic painters of statues*, to which class Nicias, *in his youth*, for he was a generation younger than Praxiteles, must have belonged. In this ἀγαλμάτων ἐγκαῦσις, or *circumlitio* of Nicias, the naked form was occasionally probably merely varnished, the colouring being applied only to the eyes, eyebrows, and lips, the hair, draperies, and the various ornaments of the dress: and, doubtless, statues so coloured, especially of females, must have had a very beautiful appearance. This subject will be found treated at greater length in the *Epochs of Painting*, already referred to, ch. vii. — W.

Pausias, who, in painting a sacrifice, foreshortened the bull, and threw his shade on part of the surrounding crowd, he throws before us the depths of the scenery and its forcible chiaroscuro; nor is he less happy, at least in my opinion, when he translates the deep aphorism by which Eupompus directed Lysippus to recur to nature, and to animate the rigid form with the air of life.*

In his dates he seldom errs, and sometimes adjusts or corrects the errors of Greek chronology, though not with equal attention; for whilst he exposes the impropriety of ascribing to Polycletus a statue of Hephestion, the friend of Alexander, who lived a century after him, he thinks it worth his while to repeat that Erynna, the contemporary of Sappho, who lived nearly as many years before him, celebrated in her poems a work of his friend and fellow-scholar Myron of Eleutheræ. His text is, at the same time, so deplorably mutilated, that it often equally defies conjecture and interpretation. Still, from what is genuine, it must be confessed that he condenses in a few chapters the contents of volumes, and fills the whole atmosphere of art. Whatever he tells, whether the most puerile legend, or the best attested fact, he tells with dignity.

Of Quintilian, whose information is all relative to style, the tenth chapter of the twelfth book, a passage on expression in the eleventh, and scattered fragments of observations analogous to the process of his own art, is all that we possess; but what he says, though comparatively small in bulk with what we have of Pliny, leaves us to wish for more. His review of the revolutions of style in painting, from Polygnotus to Apelles, and in sculpture from Phidias to Lysippus, is succinct and rapid; but though so rapid and succinct, every word is poised by characteristic precision, and can only be the result of long and judicious inquiry, and perhaps even minute examination. His theory and taste savour neither of the antiquary nor the mere dilettante; he neither dwells on the infancy of art with doating fondness, nor melts its essential and solid principles in the crucibles of merely curious or voluptuous execution.

* Eupompus, when asked by Lysippus whom of his predecessors he should imitate, pointed to the surrounding crowd and said, "Let nature be your model, not an artist." (Pliny, xxxiv. 19.) — W.

Still less in volume, and still less intentional, are the short but important observations on the principles of art, and the epochs of style, scattered over nearly all the works of Cicero, but chiefly his Orator and Rhetoric Institutions. Some of his introductions to these books might furnish the classic scenery of Poussin with figures; and though he seems to have had little native taste for painting and sculpture, and even less than he had taste for poetry, he had a conception of nature; and, with his usual acumen, comparing the principles of one art with those of another, frequently scattered useful hints, or made pertinent observations. For many of these he might probably be indebted to Hortensius, with whom, though his rival in eloquence, he lived on terms of familiarity, and who was a man of declared taste, and one of the first collectors of the time.

Pausanias*, the Cappadocian, was certainly no critic, and his credulity is at least equal to his curiosity; he is often little more than a nomenclator, and the indiscriminate chronicler of legitimate tradition and legendary trash; but the minute and scrupulous diligence with which he examined what fell under his own eye, amply makes up for what he may want of method or of judgment. His description of the pictures of Polygnotus at Delphi, and of the Jupiter of Phidias at Olympia, are, perhaps, superior to all that might have been given by men of more assuming powers — mines of information, and inestimable legacies to our arts.

The Heroics of the Elder, and the Eicones†, or Picture Galleries of the elder and younger Philostratus, though, perhaps, not expressly written for the artist, and rather to amuse than to instruct, cannot be sufficiently consulted by the epic or dramatic artist. The Heroics furnish the standard of form and habits for the Grecian and Troic warriors, from Protesilaus to Paris and Euphorbus; and he who wishes to acquaint

* The Ἑλλάδος περιήγησις, "Itinerary of Greece," of Pausanias, contains an account of probably every considerable work of art in Greece at the time that he wrote — that of Antoninus Pius (138—161, A. D.). But he has refrained from all expression of opinion on the merits of the respective works. — W.

† Εἰκόνες. The images or pictures. The elder Philostratus describes a series of sixty-five pictures, which were encased in the wall of a portico facing the sea, in the vicinity of Naples. He lived in the latter part of the second and early part of the third century of our era. — W.

himself with the limits the ancients prescribed to invention, and the latitude they allowed to expression, will find no better guide than an attentive survey of the subjects displayed in their galleries.

Such are the most prominent features of ancient criticism, and those which we wish the artist to be familiar with; the innumerable hints, maxims, anecdotes, descriptions, scattered over Lucian, Ælian, Athenæus, Achilles Tatius*, Tatian, Pollux†, and many more, may be consulted to advantage by the man of taste and letters, and probably may be neglected without much loss by the student.

Of modern writers on art, Vasari leads the van; theorist, artist, critic, and biographer in one. The history of modern art owes, no doubt, much to Vasari‡; he leads us from its cradle to its maturity with the anxious diligence of a nurse, but he likewise has her derelictions; for more loquacious than ample, and less discriminating styles than eager to accumulate descriptions, he is at an early period exhausted by the superlatives lavished on inferior claims, and forced into frigid rhapsodies and astrologic nonsense to do justice to the greater. He swears by the divinity of Michelangelo. He tells us himself that he copied every figure of the Cappella Sistina and the Stanze of Raphael; yet his memory was either so treacherous§, or his rapidity in writing so inconsiderate, that his account of both is a mere heap of errors and unpardonable confusion; and one might almost fancy that he had never entered the Vatican. Of Correggio he leaves us less informed than of Apelles. Even Bottari, the learned editor of his work, his countryman and advocate against the complaints of Agostino Carracci and Federigo Zucchero, though ever ready to fight his battles, is at a loss to account

* A late Greek writer of the fourth or fifth century, and the author of a romance entitled "*The Loves of Leucippe and Clitophon.*"—W.

† The seventh book of his *Onomasticon* contains an account of the implements and utensils employed by artists and artisans.—W.

‡ *Vite dei piu excellenti Pittori, Scultori, ed Architetti.* Flor. 1568; reprinted at Rome by Bottari, in 1758. There are many later reprints.—W.

§ There will be an opportunity to notice that incredible dereliction of reminiscence, which prompted him to transfer what he had rightly ascribed to Giorgione, in the Florentine edition, 1550, to the elder Palma in the subsequent ones. See Lecture on Chiaroscuro.

for his mistakes. He has been called the Herodotus of our art; and if the main simplicity of his narrative, and the desire of heaping anecdote on anecdote, entitle him in some degree to that appellation, we ought not to forget that the information of every day adds something to the authenticity of the Greek historian, whilst every day furnishes matter to question the credibility of the Tuscan.

What we find not in Vasari it is useless to search for amidst the rubbish of his contemporaries or followers, from Condivi to Ridolfi, and on to Malvasia, whose criticism on the style of Lodovico Carracci and his pupils in the cloisters of San Michele in Bosco, near Bologna, amounts to little more than a sonorous rhapsody of ill applied or empty metaphors and extravagant praise, till the appearance of Lanzi, who in his Storia Pittorica della Italia, has availed himself of all the information existing in his time, has corrected most of those who wrote before him, and though, perhaps, not possessed of great discriminative powers, has accumulated more instructive anecdotes, rescued more deserving names from oblivion, and opened a wider prospect of art than all his predecessors.*

The French critics composed a complete system of rules.

* It ought not, however, to be disguised, that the history of art, deviating from its real object, has been swelled to a diffuse catalogue of individuals, who, being the nurslings of different schools, or picking something from the real establishers of art, have done little more than repeat or mimic rather than imitate, at second hand, what their masters, or predecessors, had found in nature, discriminated and applied to art in obedience to its dictates. Without depreciating the merits of that multitude, who strenuously passed life in following others, it must be pronounced a task below history to allow them more than a transitory glance; neither novelty nor selection and combination of scattered materials, are entitled to serious attention from him who only investigates the real progress of art, if novelty is proved to have added nothing essential to the system, and selection to have only diluted energy, and, by a popular amalgama, to have been content with captivating the vulgar. Novelty, without enlarging the circle of fancy, may delight, but is nearer allied to whim than to invention; and an eclectic system, without equality of parts, as it originated in want of comprehension, totters on the brink of mediocrity, sinks art, or splits it into crafts decorated with the specious name of schools, whose members, authorised by prescript, emboldened by dexterity of hand, encouraged by ignorance, or heading a cabal, subsist on mere repetition, with few more legitimate claims to the honours of history, than a rhapsodist to those of the poem which he recites.

Du Fresnoy spent his life in composing and revising general aphorisms in Latin classic verse; some on granted, some on disputable, some on false principles. Though Horace was his model, neither the poet's language nor method have been imitated by him. From Du Fresnoy himself, we learn not what is essential, what accidental, what superinduced, in style; from his text none ever rose practically wiser than he sat down to study it: if he be useful, he owes his usefulness to the penetration of his English commentator; the notes of Reynolds, treasures of practical observation, place him among those whom we may read with profit. What can be learnt from precept, founded on prescriptive authority, more than on the verdicts of nature, is displayed in the volumes of De Piles and Felibien; a system, as it has been followed by the former students of their academy, and sent out with the successful combatants for the premium to their academic establishment at Rome, to have its efficiency proved by the contemplation of Italian style and execution. The timorous candidates for fame, knowing its rules to be the only road to success at their return, whatever be their individual bent of character, implicitly adopt them, and the consequence is, as may be supposed, that technical equality which borders on mediocrity. After an exulting and eager survey of the wonders the place exhibits, they all undergo a similar course of study. Six months are allotted to the Vatican, and in equal portions divided between the Fierté of Michelangelo, and the more correct graces of Raphael; the next six months are in equal intervals devoted to the academic powers of Annibale Carracci, and the purity of the antique.

About the middle of the last century the German critics established at Rome, began to claim the exclusive privilege of teaching the art, and to form a complete system of antique style. The verdicts of Mengs and Winkelmann became the oracles of antiquaries, dilettanti, and artists from the Pyrenees to the utmost north of Europe, have been detailed, and are not without their influence here. Winkelmann was the parasite of the fragments that fell from the conversation or the tablets of Mengs, a deep scholar, and better fitted to comment a classic than to give lessons on art and style: he reasoned himself into frigid reveries and Platonic dreams on beauty. As far as the taste or the instruc-

tions of his tutor directed him, he is right whenever they are; and between his own learning and the tuition of the other, his history of art delivers a specious system and a prodigious number of useful observations. He has not, however, in his regulation of epochs, discriminated styles and masters with the precision, attention, and acumen, which, from the advantages of his situation and habits, might have been expected; and disappoints us as often by meagreness, neglect, and confusion, as he offends by laboured and inflated rhapsodies on the most celebrated monuments of art. To him Germany owes the shackles of her artists, and the narrow limits of their aim; from him they have learnt to substitute the means for the end, and, by a hopeless chase after what they call beauty, to lose what alone can make beauty interesting,—expression and mind.* The works of Mengs himself are, no doubt, full of the most useful information, deep observation, and often consummate criticism. He has traced and distinguished the principles of the moderns from those of the ancients; and in his comparative view of the design, colour, composition, and expression of Raphael, Correggio, and Tiziano, with luminous perspicuity and deep precision, pointed out the prerogative or inferiority of each. As an artist, he is an instance of what perseverance, study, experience, and encouragement, can achieve to supply the place of genius.

Of English critics, whose writings preceded the present century, whether we consider solidity of theory or practical usefulness, the last is undoubtedly the first. To compare Reynolds with his predecessors would equally disgrace our judgment and impeach our gratitude.† His volumes can never be consulted without profit, and should never be quitted by the student's hand, but to embody by exercise the precepts he gives and the means he points out.

* Fuseli is speaking of a school that has long since passed away. *Sentiment* is now a predominating characteristic of the modern schools of Germany. — W.

† The writings of the elder Richardson are well deserving of mention, even in the same paragraph with those of Sir Joshua Reynolds. — W.

Lecture I. — Ancient Art.

Ταυτα μεν ουν πλαστων και γραφεων και ποιητων παιδες ἐργασονται. ὁ δε πασιν ἐπανθει τουτοις, ἡ χαρις, μαλλον δε ἁπασαι ἁμα, ὁποσαι χαριτες, και ὁποσοι ἐρωτες περίχορευοντες, τις ἀν μιμησασθαι δυναιτο.

Lucian, *Imagines.**

Introduction. Greece the legitimate parent of the Art. — Summary of the local and political causes. Conjectures on the mechanic process of the Art. Period of preparation — Polygnotus — essential style — Apollodorus — characteristic style. Period of establishment — Zeuxis, Parrhasius, Timanthes Period of refinement — Eupompus, Apelles, Aristides, Euphranor.

The difficulties of the task prescribed to me, if they do not preponderate, are, at least, equal to the honour of the situation. If to discourse on any topic with truth, precision, and clearness, before a mixed or fortuitous audience, before men neither initiated in the subject, nor rendered minutely attentive by expectation, be no easy task, how much more arduous must it be to speak systematically on an art, before a select assembly, composed of *professors*, whose life has been divided between theory and practice, of *critics*, whose taste has been refined by contemplation and comparison, and of *students*, who, bent on the same pursuit, look for the best, and always most compendious, method of mastering the principles, to arrive at its emoluments and honours? Your lecturer is to instruct *them* in the principles of "composition; to form their taste for design and colouring; to strengthen their judgment; to point out to them the beauties and imperfections of celebrated works of art; and the particular excellencies and defects of great masters; and, finally, to lead them into the readiest and most efficacious paths of study."† If, Gentlemen, these directions presup-

* "All this the statuaries, painters, and poets may enable us to effect: but that transcendently blooming grace, or, rather, all the graces and loves, as numerous as they may be, that dance around her, who shall be able to imitate!" — *Tooke's Translation.* — W.

† Abstract of the Laws of the Royal Academy, article *Professors*; page 2.

pose in the student a sufficient stock of elementary knowledge, an expertness in the rudiments, not mere wishes, but a peremptory will of improvement, and judgment with docility, how much more do they imply in the person selected to address them—knowledge founded on theory, substantiated and matured by practice, a mass of select and well digested materials, perspicuity of method and command of words, imagination to place things in such views as they are not commonly seen in, presence of mind, and that resolution, the result of conscious vigour, which, in daring to correct errors, cannot be easily discountenanced! As conditions like these would discourage abilities far superior to mine, my hopes of approbation, moderate as they are, must, in a great measure, depend on that indulgence which may grant to my will what it would refuse to my powers.

Before I proceed to the history of style itself, it seems to be necessary that we should agree about the terms which denote its object, and perpetually recur in treating of it, that my vocabulary of technic expression should not clash with the dictionary of my audience: mine is nearly that of your late president. I shall confine myself, at present, to a few of the most important;—the words nature, beauty, grace, taste, copy, imitation, genius, talent. Thus, by *nature* I understand the general and permanent principles of visible objects, not disfigured by accident, or distempered by disease, not modified by fashion or local habits. Nature is a collective idea, and, though its essence exist in each individual of the species, can never in its perfection inhabit a single object. On *beauty* I do not mean to perplex you or myself with abstract ideas, and the romantic reveries of Platonic philosophy, or to inquire whether it be the result of a simple or complex principle. As a local idea, beauty is a despotic princess, and subject to the anarchies of despotism; enthroned to-day, dethroned to-morrow. The beauty we acknowledge is that harmonious whole of the human frame, that unison of parts to one end, which enchants us; the result of the standard set by the great masters of our art, the ancients, and confirmed by the submissive verdict of modern imitation. By *grace* I mean that artless balance of motion and repose sprung from character, founded on propriety, which neither falls short of the demands nor overleaps the

modesty of nature. Applied to execution, it means that dexterous power which hides the means by which it was attained, the difficulties it has conquered. When we say *taste*, we mean not crudely the knowledge of what is right in art: taste estimates the degrees of excellence, and, by comparison, proceeds from justness to refinement. Our language, or rather those who use it, generally confound, when speaking of the art, *copy* with *imitation*, though essentially different in operation and meaning. Precision of eye and obedience of hand are the requisites of the former, without the least pretence to choice, what to select, what to reject; whilst choice, directed by judgment or taste, constitutes the essence of imitation, and alone can raise the most dextrous copyist to the noble rank of an artist. The imitation of the ancients was, *essential*, *characteristic*, *ideal*. The first cleared nature of accident, defect, excrescence; the second found the stamen which connects character with the central form; the third raised the whole and the parts to the highest degree of unison. Of *genius* I shall speak with reserve, for no word has been more indiscriminately confounded; by genius I mean that power which enlarges the circle of human knowledge; which discovers new materials of nature, or combines the known with novelty, whilst *talent* arranges, cultivates, polishes the discoveries of genius.

Guided by these preliminaries, we now approach that happy coast, where, from an arbitrary hieroglyph, the palliative of ignorance, from a tool of despotism, or a ponderous monument of eternal sleep, art emerged into life, motion, and liberty; where situation, climate, national character, religion, manners, and government conspired to raise it on that permanent basis, which, after the ruins of the fabric itself, still subsists and bids defiance to the ravages of time; as uniform in the principle as various in its applications, the art of the Greeks possessed in itself and propagated, like its chief object Man, the germs of immortality.

I shall not detail here the reasons and the coincidence of fortunate circumstance which raised the Greeks to be the arbiters of form.* The standard they erected, the canon

* This has been done in a superior manner by J. G. Herder, in his *Ideen zur Philosophie der geschichte der Menschheit*, vol. iii. book 13; a work translated under the title of *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*, 4to.

they framed, fell not from heaven: but as they fancied themselves of divine origin, and *Religion* was the first mover of their art, it followed that they should endeavour to invest their authors with the most perfect form; and as Man possesses that exclusively, they were led to a complete and intellectual study of its elements and constitution; this, with their *climate*, which allowed that form to grow, and to show itself to the greatest advantage; with their *civil* and *political* institutions, which established and encouraged exercises and manners best calculated to develope its powers; and, above all, that simplicity of their end, that uniformity of pursuit which in all its derivations retraced the great principle from which it sprang, and, like a central stamen, drew it out into one immense connected web of congenial imitation; these, I say, are the reasons why the Greeks carried the art to a height which no subsequent time or race has been able to rival or even to approach.

Great as these advantages were, it is not to be supposed that nature deviated from her gradual progress in the development of human faculties, in favour of the Greeks. Greek Art had her infancy, but the Graces rocked the cradle, and Love taught her to speak. If ever legend deserved our belief, the amorous tale of the Corinthian maid, who traced the shade of her departing lover by the secret lamp, appeals to our sympathy to grant it*, and leads us, at the same time, to some observations on the first mechanical essays of painting, and that *linear method* which, though passed nearly unnoticed by *Winkelmann*, seems to have continued as the basis of execution, even when the instrument for which it was chiefly adapted had long been laid aside.

The etymology of the word used by the Greeks to express *painting*, being the same with that which they employ for *writing*, makes the similarity of tool, materials, method,

* The legend is this,—the daughter of one Dibutades, a potter of Sicyon, at Corinth, struck with the shadow of her lover, who was about to leave her, cast by the lamp on the wall, drew its outline with such effect, that her father cut away the plaster within the outline, took an impression from the wall with clay, and baked it with the rest of his pottery. And this singular production, says the tradition, was still preserved in Corinth down to the time of the destruction of the city by Mummius, 146. B. C. (Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* 35. 43.)—W.

almost certain.* The tool was a style or pen of wood or metal; the materials a board, or a levigated plane of wood, metal, stone, or some prepared compound; the method, letters, or lines.

The first essays of the art were *skiagrams*, simple outlines of a shade, similar to those which have been introduced to vulgar use by the students and parasites of physiognomy, under the name of silhouettes, without any other addition of character or feature but what the profile of the object thus delineated could afford.

The next step of the art was the *monogram*, outlines of figures without light or shade, but with some addition of the parts within the outline and from that to the *monochrom*, or paintings of a single colour on a plane or tablet, primed with white, and then covered with what they called punic wax†, first amalgamated with a tough, resinous pigment, generally of a red, sometimes dark brown, or black colour. *In*, or rather *through* this thin inky ground, the outlines were traced with a firm but pliant style, which they called *cestrum:* if the traced line happened to be incorrect or wrong, it was gently effaced with the finger or with a sponge, and easily replaced by a fresh one.‡ When the whole design was settled, and no farther alteration intended, it was suffered

* That is, because the tools were originally the same; the instrument was called γραφίς, the Roman *cestrum*, whence γραφική, the graphic art, or drawing.— W.

† This punic wax (*Cera Punica*) was merely purified wax. The method of its preparation is preserved in Pliny (xxi. 49.), and in Dioscorides (ii. 105.). It was the common yellow wax, purified and bleached by being boiled three times in sea-water, with a small quantity of nitre, fresh water being used each time, It was then placed in the sun to dry, being first covered with a thin cloth to moderate the sun's power. This wax was the Greek substitute for oil in painters' colours; but it was also used for many other purposes.— W.

‡ The *cestrum* is merely the Roman term for the *graphis*, which was a hard pointed instrument, and could only scratch a line, not *paint* one. The dark line on the vases, and, indeed, in all monograms (μονόγραμμα), which were originally executed on a white ground (ἐν πίνακι λελευκωμένῳ), was made with the pencil or ὑπογραφίς, called pencillum by the Romans. The grounds probably of these outlines or monograms were made wet with some species of wax varnish before the outlines were drawn, but it was a clear and transparent liquid, and certainly nothing of an inky nature.— W.

to dry, was covered, to make it permanent, with a brown encaustic varnish, the lights were worked over again, and rendered more brilliant with a point still more delicate, according to the gradual advance from mere outlines to some indications, and, at last, to masses of light and shade, and from those to the superinduction of different colours, or the invention of the *polychrom*, which, by the addition of the *pencil* to the style, raised the mezzotinto or stained drawing to a legitimate picture, and at length produced that vaunted *harmony*, the magic scale of Grecian colour.*

* This account is founded on the conjectures of Mr. *Riem*, in his Treatise on *die Malerey der Alten*, or the *Painting of the Ancients*, 4to. Berlin, 1787.

[This is mere conjecture upon conjecture. The paintings on the vases, considered as works of art, vary exceedingly in the details of their execution, though, as to method, they may be arranged into two principal classes—the black and the yellow, for those which do not come strictly under either of these heads are too few, or vary too slightly, to require a distinct classification.

The black vases, or those with the black figures (skiagrams) on the stained reddish-yellow terra cotta, are the most ancient, but the style of these vases was sometimes imitated by later artists. The inferior examples of this class have some of them traces of the graphis upon them, which appear to have been made when the clay was still soft; some also have lines or scratches upon the figures themselves, which have been added after the painting was completed. The style of design of these black figures has been termed the Egyptian or Dædalian style. The varieties in this style are occasionally a purple tint instead of the black; or the addition of a red sash or white vest, and sometimes a white face, or white hands and feet.

The vases with the yellow monograms, or outline drawings, or, rather, the black monograms, on the yellow grounds, constitute the great mass of ancient vases. The drawings on these vases are of very unequal execution. On the inferior vases of this class, also, will be found traces of the graphis, which appear to have been likewise drawn upon the soft clay, or, at least upon some resinous waxy varnish placed over it. The only colour upon these vases, independent of that of the clay, is the dark back-ground, generally black, which renders the figures very prominent The drawings on the best vases are mere monograms, with these dark back-grounds, but they have not the slightest traces of the cestrum or graphis upon them; the outlines are drawn with the hair pencil, in colour similar to that of the back-ground, which is a species of black varnish, prepared apparently from *jet*—the gagates lapis (γαγάτης) of Pliny, which he remarks (xxxvi. 34.) is indelible when used on this kind of earthenware.

There appears to be no example of the perfect monochrom (μονοχρώματον) on the ancient vases, and examples of the polychrom, or complete picture, are very rare. There are a few examples in the British Museum, which, however, consist in the mere addition of colours to the ordinary

If this conjecture, for it is not more, on the process of linear painting, formed on the evidence and comparison of passages always unconnected, and frequently contradictory, be founded in fact, the rapturous astonishment at the supposed momentaneous production of the Herculanean dancers, and the figures on the earthern vases of the ancients, will cease; or, rather, we shall no longer suffer ourselves to be deluded by palpable impossibility of execution. On a ground of levigated lime, or on potter's ware, no velocity or certainty attainable by human hands can conduct a full pencil with that degree of evenness equal, from beginning to end, with which we see those figures executed, or, if it could, would ever be able to fix the line on the glassy surface without its flowing. To make the appearances we see possible, we must have recourse to the linear process that has been described, and transfer our admiration to the perseverance, the correctness of principle, the elegance of taste that conducted the artist's hand, without presuming to arm it with contradictory powers. The figures he drew, and we admire, are not the magic produce of a winged pencil; they are the result of gradual improvement, exquisitely finished *monochroms*.*

How long the pencil continued only to assist when it began to engross, and when it at last entirely supplanted the cestrum, cannot, in the perplexity of accidental report, be ascertained. Apollodorus, in the 93d Olympiad, and Zeuxis, in the 94th, are said to have used it with freedom and with power. The battle of the Lapithæ and the Centaurs, which, according to Pausanias, Parrhasius painted on the shield of the Minerva of Phidias, to be chased by Mys, could be no-

monogram, but they are not incorporated with the vase, as the black and ground tints are, but are subject to scale, and are easily rubbed off: they consist of white and red, yellow and blue colours. The vases, however, of this class are probably of a comparatively late manufacture, as their illustrations are drawn in a very inferior style.

The majority of ancient vases that have been yet discovered were found in tombs about Capora and Nola; their manufacture seems to have ceased long before the foundation of the Roman empire, for they were sought even in the time of Julius Cæsar as objects of ancient workmanship, *operis antiqui*. Suetonius. *Jul. Cæs.* 81. (More information on this subject will be found in the article PAINTING, by the editor, in the *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*.)—W.]

* *Monograms*.—The *Monochrom* is either a figure in light and shade, or the simple silhouette.—W.

thing but a monochrom, and was probably designed with the cestrum, as an instrument of greater accuracy.* Apelles and Protogenes, nearly a century afterwards, drew their contested lines with the pencil; and that alone, as delicacy and evanescent subtilty were the characteristic of those lines, may give an idea of their excellence. And yet, in their time, the *diagraphic* process†, which is the very same with the *linear* one we have described, made a part of liberal education. And Pausias of Sicyon, the contemporary of Apelles, and perhaps the greatest master of composition amongst the ancients, when employed to repair the decayed pictures of Polygnotus at Thespiæ, was adjudged by general opinion to have egregiously failed in the attempt, because he had substituted the pencil for the cestrum, and entered a contest of superiority with weapons not his own.

Here it might seem in its place to say something on the encaustic method used by the ancients, were it not a subject by ambiguity of expression and conjectural dispute so involved in obscurity, that a true account of its process must be despaired of: the most probable idea we can form of it is, that it bore some resemblance to our oil painting, and that the name was adopted to denote the use of materials inflam-

* Pausanias, Attic. c. xxviii. The word used by Pausanias, καταγραψαι, shows that the figures of Parrhasius were intended for a bassorilievo. They were in profile. This is the sense of the word *catagrapha* in Pliny, xxxv. c. 8.; he translates it, "obliquas imagines." [*Catagrapha* means much more than *profiles*, which were the first forms of the graphic art; it signifies *foreshortenings*, though the expression of Pausanias can convey only the simple idea of *drawing*. — W.]

† By the authority chiefly of Pamphilus, the master of Apelles, who taught at Sicyon. "Hujus auctoritate," says Pliny, xxxv. 10, "effectum est Sicyone primum, deinde et in tota Græcia, ut pueri ingenui ante omnia *diagraphicen*, hoc est, picturam in buxo, docerentur," &c. *Harduin*, contrary to the common editions, reads indeed, and by the authority, he says, of all the MSS., *graphicen*, which he translates ars "delineandi," (desseigner); but he has not proved that graphice means not more than design; and if he had, what was it that Pamphilus taught? he was not the inventor of what he had been taught himself. He established, or rather renewed, a particular method of drawing, which contained the rudiments, and facilitated the method of painting. [The service of Pamphilus was not a discovery, but the rendering an art popular, or, perhaps, universal, among the *free-born*. Pliny's words are — "graphice, hoc est pictura in buxo;" that is, drawing in outline with the graphis or cestrum on tablets of box. — W.]

mable, or prepared by fire, the supposed durability of which, whether applied hot or cold, authorised the terms *ἐνεκαυσε*, and *inussit.**

The first great name of that epoch of the preparatory period, when facts appear to overbalance conjecture, is that of Polygnotus of Thasos, who painted the *Poecile* at Athens, and the *Lesche*, or public hall, at Delphi.† Of these works, but chiefly of the two large pictures at Delphi, which represented scenes subsequent to the eversion of Troy, and Ulysses consulting the spirit of Tiresias in Hades, Pausanias‡ gives a minute and circumstantial detail; by which we are led to surmise, that what is now called composition was totally wanting in them as a whole: for he begins his description at one end of the picture, and finishes it at the opposite extremity; a senseless method, if we suppose that a central group, or a principal figure, to which the rest were in a certain degree subordinate, attracted the eye. It appears as plain that they had no perspective, the series of figures on the second or middle ground being described as placed above those on the foreground, and the figures in the distance above the whole. The honest method, too, which the painter chose of annexing to many of his figures their names in writing, savours much of the infancy of painting. We should, however, be cautious to impute solely to ignorance or imbecility what might rest on the firm base of permanent principle.§

* That is, *burnt it in*. The colours of the Greeks were ordinarily mixed with wax, some resinous gum, and probably an alkali, to render them soluble in water; but colours mixed with wax and mastich alone, boiled together in certain proportions, may be applied with water as a vehicle. When the picture was painted with colours so prepared, which might be applied wet or dry, they were *fixed*, or *burnt in*, by applying a hot iron, or pan of live coal, called a *cauterium*. *Ceræ*, waxes, was the common term for painters' colours among the Romans. (See the article on PAINTING, already referred to.)—W.

† Polygnotus came to Athens, probably with Cimon, after the conquest of Thasos, about 463 B. C.—W.

‡ Pausan. Phocica, c. XXV. seq.

§ It is probably wrong to speak of these works as *two* pictures only: there were *three* subjects;—on the right, the destruction of Troy, and the Greeks returning to their native land; on the left, the visit of Ulysses to the Shades to consult the soul of Tiresias. The various groups of figures were probably no more one picture than that they all contributed to tell the same story. As one group was placed immediately *above* another, it is but fair to suppose that they were a *series* of

The genius of Polygnotus was, more than that of any other artist before or after, Phidias, perhaps, alone excepted, a public genius, his works monumental works, and these very pictures the votive offerings of the Gnidians. The art at that summit, when exerting its powers to record the feats, consecrate the acts, perpetuate the rites, propagate the religion, or to disseminate the peculiar doctrines of a nation, heedless of the rules prescribed to inferior excellence and humbler pursuits, returns to its elements, leaps strict possibility, combines remote causes with present effects, connects local distance, and unites separate moments. Simplicity, parallelism, apposition, take place of variety, contrast, and composition. Such was the *Lesche* painted by Polygnotus; and if we consider the variety of powers that distinguished many of the parts, we must incline to ascribe the primitive arrangement of the whole rather to the artist's choice and lofty simplicity, than want of comprehension. Nature had endowed him with that rectitude of taste which in the individuum discovers the stamen of the genus; hence his style of design was essential with glimpses of *grandeur** and ideal beauty. Polygnotus, says Aristotle, *improves* the model. His invention reached the conception of undescribed being in the dæmon Eurynomus; filled the chasm of description in Theseus and Pirithous, in Ariadne and Phædra; and im-

paintings, and probably on distinct panels, encased in the walls, according to a Greek custom. However, we can form no opinion of their merits of composition from the description of Pausanias: it is evident that the style of Polygnotus was strictly ethic; his principle of imitation may be defined as that of representation, independent of all accessory incident; whatever was not absolutely necessary to illustrate the principal object, was indicated merely by symbol: two or three warriors represented an army, a few captives a conquest, a few dead bodies a victory; a house or a wall a city; the throwing down a wall the destruction of a city, a tent an encampment, the taking down a tent, a departure, a ship a fleet, &c. — W.

* This I take to be the sense of Μεγεθος here, which distinguished him, according to Ælian, Var. Hist. iv. 3., from Dionysius of Colophon. The word Τελειοις in the same passage: και ἐν τοις τελειοις εἰργαζετο τα ἀθλα, I translate, *he aimed at, he sought his praise in the representation of essential proportion*; which leads to ideal beauty.

The κρειττους, χειρους, ὁμοιους; or the βελτιονας ἡ καθ' ἡμας, ἡκα. τοιουτους, ἡ χειρονας, of Aristotle, Poetic. c. 2., by which he distinguishes Polygnotus, Dionysius, Pauson, confirms the sense given to the passage of Ælian.

proved its terrors in the spectre of Tityus; whilst colour, to assist it, became in his hand an organ of expression. Such was the prophetic glow which still *crimsoned* the cheeks of his Cassandra in the time of Lucian.* The improvements in painting which Pliny ascribes to him, of having dressed the heads of his females in variegated veils and *bandeaus*, and robed them in lucid drapery, of having gently opened the lips, given a glimpse of the teeth, and lessened the former monotony of face—such improvements, I say, were surely the most trifling part of a power to which the age of Apelles and that of Quintilian paid equal homage; nor can it add much to our esteem for him, to be told by Pliny that there existed, in the portico of Pompey, a picture of his with the figure of a warrior in an attitude so ambiguous as to make it a question whether he were ascending or descending.† Such a figure could only be the offspring of mental or technic imbecility, even if it resembled the celebrated one of a Diomede carrying off the palladium with one, and holding a sword in the other hand, on the intaglio inscribed with the name of Dioscorides.

With this simplicity of manner and materials the art seems to have proceeded from Polygnotus, Aglaophon, Phidias, Panænus, Colotes, and Evenor the father of Parrhasius, during a period of more or less disputed Olympiads, to the appearance of Apollodorus the Athenian‡, who applied the essential principles of Polygnotus to the delineation of the

* Παρειῶν το ἐνερευθες, οἱαν την Κασσανδραν ἐν τη λεσχη ἐποιησε τοις Δελφοις. Lucian: εἰκονες. This, and what Pausanias tells of the colour of Eurynomus in the same picture, together with the coloured draperies mentioned by Pliny, makes it evident, that the "simplex color" ascribed by Quintilian to Polygnotus and Aglaophon, implies less a single colour, as some have supposed, than that simplicity always attendant on the infancy of painting, which leaves every colour unmixed and crudely by itself. Indeed, the *Poecile* (ἡ ποικιλη στοα), which obtained its name from his pictures, is alone a sufficient proof of variety of colours.[1]

† A man might be well represented on a ladder, and yet it might not be easy to decide whether he were ascending or descending. —W.

‡ Apollodorus was contemporary with Zeuxis, and flourished principally about 430—420 B. C., or about a generation later than Polygnotus. —W.

[1] Lucian. *Imagines*, c. 7., mentions Polygnotus among those artists who best understood the mixing and laying on of colours; the others being Euphranor, Apelles, and Aëtion. —W.

species, by investigating the leading forms that discriminate the various classes of human qualities and passions. The acuteness of his taste led him to discover that as all men were connected by one general form, so they were separated each by some predominant power, which fixed character, and bound them to a class: that in proportion as this specific power partook of individual peculiarities, the farther it was removed from a share in that harmonious system which constitutes nature, and consists in a due balance of all its parts; thence he drew his line of imitation, and personified the central form of the class, to which his object belonged, and to which the rest of its qualities administered without being absorbed: agility was not suffered to destroy firmness, solidity, or weight; nor strength and weight agility; elegance did not degenerate to effeminacy, or grandeur swell to hugeness; such were his principles of style.* His expression extended them to the mind, if we may judge from the two subjects mentioned by Pliny, in which he seems to have personified the characters of devotion and impiety; *that*, in the adoring figure of a priest, perhaps of Chryses, expanding his gratitude at the shrine of the god whose arrows avenged his wrongs and restored his daughter: and *this*, in the figure of Ajax wrecked, and from the sea-swept rock hurling defiance unto the murky sky. As neither of these subjects can present themselves to a painter's mind without a contrast of the most awful and terrific tones of colour, magic of light and shade, and unlimited command over the tools of art, we may, with Pliny and with Plutarch, consider Apollodorus as the first assertor of the pencil's honours, as the first colourist of his age, and the man who opened the gates of art which the Heracleot Zeuxis entered.†

* The whole of the above is Fuseli's explanation of the expression, *species exprimere instituit*, which may mean that Apollodorus was the first to give *actual appearances*, that is, that there was both local and dramatic truth of representation in his works. To reconcile this with the glory of Polygnotus and his contemporaries, we must suppose that they painted men as they actually were or might be, and that Apollodorus painted them as they incidentally *appeared*, according to the subject treated. — W.

† Hic primus species exprimere instituit, Pliny xxxv. 36., as *species* in the sense Harduin takes it, "oris et habitus venustas," cannot be refused

From the essential style of Polygnotus, and the specific discrimination of Apollodorus, Zeuxis, by comparison of what belonged to the genus and what to the class, framed at last that ideal form, which, in his opinion, constituted the supreme degree of human beauty, or, in other words, embodied possibility, by uniting the various but homogeneous powers scattered among many, in one object, to one end. Such a system, if it originated in genius, was the considerate result of taste, refined by the unremitting perseverance with which he observed, consulted, compared, selected the congenial but scattered forms of nature. Our ideas are the offspring of our senses: we are not more able to create the form of a being we have not seen, without retrospect to one we know, than we are able to create a new sense. He whose fancy has conceived an idea of the most beautiful form, must have composed it from actual existence, and he alone can comprehend what one degree of beauty wants to become equal to another, and at last superlative. He who thinks the pretty handsome, will think the handsome a beauty, and fancy he has met an ideal form in a merely handsome one; whilst he who has compared beauty with beauty, will at last improve form upon form to a perfect image: this was the method of Zeuxis, and this he learnt from Homer, whose mode of ideal composition, according to Quintilian, he considered as his model.* Each individual of Homer forms a

to Polygnotus, and the artists immediately preceding Apollodorus: it must mean here the subdivisions of generic form — the classes.

At this period we may with probability fix the invention of local colour and tone; which, though strictly speaking it be neither the light nor the shade, is regulated by the medium which tinges both. This Pliny calls "splendor." To Apollodorus Plutarch ascribes likewise the invention of tints, the mixtures of colour and the gradations of shade, if I conceive the passage rightly: Ἀπολλοδωρος ὁ Ζωγραφος Ἀνθρωπων πρωτος ἐξευρων φθοραν και ἀποχρωσιν Σκιας. (Plutarch, Bellone an pace Ath., &c. 346.) This was the element of the ancient Ἁρμογη, that imperceptible transition, which, without opacity, confusion, or hardness, united local colour, demi-tint, shade, and reflexes.—[This is *tone*, but it must not be altogether denied to the earlier painters, for Plutarch himself (*Timol.* 36.) ascribes the same quality, though in a less degree, to the works of Dionysius of Colophon. The distinction is, that what in the works of Dionysius was a mere gradation of *light and shade*, was in those of Apollodorus a gradation also of *tint*. — W.]

* Quintilian (*Inst. Orator.* xii. 10.) says that Zeuxis followed Homer, and loved powerful forms even in women. — W.

class, expresses and is circumscribed by one quality of heroic power; Achilles alone unites their various but congenial energies. The grace of Nireus, the dignity of Agamemnon, the impetuosity of Hector, the magnitude, the steady prowess of the great, the velocity of the lesser Ajax, the perseverance of Ulysses, the intrepidity of Diomede, are emanations of energy that reunite in one splendid centre fixed in Achilles. This standard of the unison of homogeneous powers exhibited in *successive action* by the poet, the painter, invigorated, no doubt, by the contemplation of the works of Phidias, transferred to his own art, and substantiated by *form*, when he selected the congenial beauties of Croton to compose a perfect female.* Like Phidias, too, he appears to have been less pathetic than sublime, and even in his female forms more ample and august than elegant or captivating: his principle was epic, and this Aristotle either considered not, or did not comprehend, when he refuses him the expression of character in action and feature. Jupiter on his throne, encircled by the celestial synod, and Helen, the arbitress of Troy, contained, probably, the principal elements of his style; but he could trace the mother's agitation in Alcmena, and in Penelope the pangs of wedded love.

On those powers of his invention, which Lucian relates in the memoir inscribed with the name of Zeuxis, I shall reserve my observations for a fitter moment. Of his colour we know little, but it is not unreasonable to suppose that it emulated the beauties and the grandeur of his design; and that he extended light and shade to masses, may be implied from his peculiar method of painting monochroms on a black ground, adding the lights in white.†

The correctness of Parrhasius succeeded to the genius of Zeuxis. He circumscribed his ample style, and, by subtle examination of outline, established that standard of divine

* This was for a picture of Helen for the temple of *Juno* Lacinia at Croton, and which Zeuxis painted from five virgins of that place. Zeuxis exhibited this picture for a head-money, before it was placed in its destination, whence it acquired the nick-name of the Prostitute. (Cicero, *de Invent.* ii. 1.; Ælian, *Var. Hist.* iv. 12.) — W.

† "Pinxit et monochromata ex albo." Pliny, xxxv. 9. This Aristotle (Poet. c. 6.) calls λευκογραφειν. — [Or, more probably, from the Greek custom of using *white grounds*, we should understand that Zeuxis executed designs similar to the Italian *chiariscuri* upon a *white* ground. — W.]

and heroic form which raised him to the authority of a legislator, from whose decisions there was no appeal. He gave to the divine and heroic character in painting, what Polycletus had given to the human in sculpture, by his Doryphorus, a canon of proportion. Phidias had discovered in the nod of the Homeric Jupiter the characteristic of majesty, *inclination of the head:* this hinted to him a higher elevation of the neck behind, a bolder protrusion of the front, and the increased perpendicular of the profile. To this conception Parrhasius fixed a maximum; that point from which descends the ultimate line of celestial beauty, the angle within which moves what is inferior, beyond which what is portentous. From the head conclude to the proportions of the neck, the limbs, the extremities; from the father to the race of gods; all, the sons of one, Zeus; derived from one source of tradition, Homer; formed by one artist, Phidias: on him measured and decided by Parrhasius. In the simplicity of this principle, adhered to by the succeeding periods, lies the uninterrupted progress and the unattainable superiority of Grecian art. With this prerogative, which evidently implies a profound as well as general knowledge of the parts, how are we to reconcile the criticism passed on the intermediate parts of his forms as inferior to their outline? or how could Winkelmann, in contradiction with his own principles, explain it by a want of anatomic knowledge?* How is it possible to suppose that he who decided his outline with such intelligence that it appeared ambient, and pronounced the parts that escaped the eye, should have been uninformed of its contents? Let us rather suppose that the defect ascribed to the intermediate forms of his bodies, if such a fault there was, consisted in an affectation of smoothness bordering on insipidity, in something effeminately voluptuous, which absorbed their character and the idea of elastic vigour; and this Euphranor seems to have hinted at, when in comparing his own Theseus with that of Parrhasius, he pronounced the Ionian's to have fed

* In lineis extremis palmam adeptus—minor tamen videtur, sibi comparatus, in mediis corporibus exprimendis. Pliny, xxxv. 10. Here we find the inferiority of the middle parts merely relative to himself. Compared with himself, Parrhasius was not all equal.

on roses, his own on flesh *: emasculate softness was not, in his opinion, the proper companion of the contour, or flowery freshness of colour an adequate substitute for the sterner tints of heroic form.

None of the ancients seem to have united or wished to combine, as man and artist, more qualities seemingly incompatible than Parrhasius. The volubility and ostentatious insolence of an Asiatic with Athenian simplicity and urbanity of manners; punctilious correctness with blandishments of handling and luxurious colour, and with sublime and pathetic conception, a fancy libidinously sportive.† If he was not the inventor, he surely was the greatest master of allegory, supposing that he really embodied, by signs universally comprehended, that image of the Athenian ΔΗΜΟΣ, or people, which was to combine and to express at once its contradictory qualities. Perhaps he traced the jarring branches to their source, the aboriginal moral principle of the Athenian character, which he made intuitive.‡ This supposition alone can shed a dawn of possibility on what else appears impossible. We know that the personification of the Athenian Δημος was an object of sculpture, and that its images by Lyson and Leochares§ were publicly set up; but there is no clue to decide whether they preceded or followed the conceit of Parrhasius. It was repeated by Aristolaus, the son of Pausias.

* Theseus, in quo dixit, eundem apud Parrhasium rosa pastum esse, suum vero carne. Plin. xxxv. 11.

† The epithet which he gave to himself of Ἁβροδιαιτος, the delicate, the elegant, and the epigram he is said to have composed on himself, are known. See Athenæus, l. xii. He wore, says Ælian, *Var. Hist.* ix. 11., a purple robe and a golden garland; he bore a staff wound round with tendrils of gold, and his sandals were tied to his feet and ankles with golden straps. Of his easy simplicity we may judge from his dialogue with Socrates in Xenophon; ἀπομνημονευατων, l. iii. Of his libidinous fancy, besides what Pliny says, from his Archigallus, and the Meleager and Atalante mentioned by Suetonius *in Tiberio*, c. 44.

‡ The meaning of this is very obscure, and certainly throws no light whatever on the subject. — W.

§ In the portico of the Piræus by Leochares; in the hall of the Five-hundred, by Lyson; in the back portico of the Ceramicus there was a picture of Theseus, of Democracy and the Demos, by Euphranor. Pausan. *Attic.* i. 3. Aristolaus, according to Pliny, was a painter, "è severissimis."

The decided forms of Parrhasius, Timanthes the Cythnian, his competitor for fame, attempted to inspire with mind and to animate with passions. No picture of antiquity is more celebrated than his Immolation of Iphigenia in Aulis, painted, as Quintilian informs us, in contest with Colotes of Teos, a painter and sculptor from the school of Phidias; crowned with victory at its rival exhibition, and since, the theme of unlimited praise from the orators and historians of antiquity, though the solidity or justice of their praise relatively to our art has been questioned by modern criticism. On this subject, which not only contains the gradations of affection from the most remote to the closest link of humanity, but appears to me to offer the fairest specimen of the limits which the theory of the ancients had prescribed to the expression of pathos, I think it my duty the more circumstantially to expatiate, as the censure passed on the method of Timanthes has been sanctioned by the highest authority in matters of art, — that of your late president, in his eighth discourse at the delivery of the academic prize* for the best picture painted for this very subject.

How did Timanthes treat it? Iphigenia, the victim ordained by the oracle to be offered for the success of the Greek expedition against Troy, was represented standing ready for immolation at the altar, the priest, the instruments of death, at her side; and around her an assembly of the most important agents, or witnesses, of the terrible solemnity, from Ulysses, who had disengaged her from the embraces of her mother at Mycenæ, to her nearest male relations, her uncle Menelaus, and her own father, Agamemnon. Timanthes, say Pliny and Quintilian, with surprising similarity of phrase, when, in gradation he had consumed every image of grief within the reach of art, from the unhappy priest to the deeper grief of Ulysses, and from that to the pangs of kindred sympathy in Menelaus, unable to express *with dignity* the father's woe, threw a veil, or, if you will, a mantle over his face. This mantle, the pivot of objection, indiscriminately borrowed, as might easily be supposed, by all the concurrents for the prize, gave rise to the following series of criticisms: —

"Before I conclude, I cannot avoid making one observation on the pictures now before us. I have observed that

* In the year 1778. — W.

every candidate has copied the celebrated invention of Timanthes in hiding the face of Agamemnon in his mantle; indeed such lavish encomiums have been bestowed on this thought, and that too by men of the highest character in critical knowledge, — Cicero, Quintilian, Valerius Maximus, and Pliny, — and have been since re-echoed by almost every modern that has written on the arts, that your adopting it can neither be wondered at nor blamed. It appears now to be so much connected with the subject, that the spectator would perhaps be disappointed in not finding united in the picture what he always united in his mind, and considered as indispensably belonging to the subject. But it may be observed, that those who praise this circumstance were not painters. They use it as an illustration only of their own art: it served their purpose, and it was certainly not their business to enter into the objections that lie against it in another art. I fear *we* have but very scanty means of exciting those powers over the imagination which make so very considerable and refined a part of poetry. It is a doubt with me, whether we should even make the attempt. The chief, if not the only occasion which the painter has for this artifice, is, when the subject is improper to be more fully represented, either for the sake of decency, or to avoid what would be disagreeable to be seen; and this is not to raise or increase the passions, which is the reason that is given for this practice, but, on the contrary, to diminish their effect.

"Mr. Falconet has observed, in a note on this passage, in his translation of Pliny, that the circumstance of covering the face of Agamemnon was probably not in consequence of any fine imagination of the painter, — which he considers as a discovery of the critics, — but merely copied from the description of the sacrifice, as it is found in Euripides.

"The words from which the picture is supposed to be taken, are these: — *Agamemnon saw Iphigenia advance towards the fatal altar; he groaned, he turned aside his head, he shed tears, and covered his face with his robe.*

"Falconet does not at all acquiesce in the praise that is bestowed on Timanthes; not only because it is not his invention, but because he thinks meanly of this trick of concealing, except in instances of blood, where the objects would be too horrible to be seen; but, says he, 'in an afflicted

father, in a king, in Agamemnon, you, who are a painter, conceal from me the most interesting circumstance, and then put me off with sophistry and a veil. You are (he adds) a feeble painter, without resources; you do not know even those of your art. I care not what veil it is, whether closed hands, arms raised, or any other action that conceals from me the countenance of the hero. You think of veiling Agamemnon; you have unveiled your own ignorance.'

"To what Falconet has said, we may add, that supposing this method of leaving the expression of grief to the imagination to be, as it was thought to be, the invention of the painter, and that it deserves all the praise that has been given it, still it is a trick that will serve but once; whoever does it a second time will not only want novelty, but be justly suspected of using artifice to evade difficulties.

"If difficulties overcome make a great part of the merit of art, difficulties evaded can deserve but little commendation."

To this string of animadversions, I subjoin with diffidence the following observations: —

The subject of Timanthes was the immolation of Iphigenia; Iphigenia was the principal figure, and her form, her resignation, or her anguish, the painter's principal task: the figure of Agamemnon, however important, is merely accessory, and no more necessary to make the subject a completely tragic one, than that of Clytemnestra, the mother, no more than that of Priam, to impress us with sympathy at the death of Polyxena. It is therefore a misnomer of the French critic to call Agamemnon "the hero" of the subject.

Neither the French nor the English critic appears to me to have comprehended the real motive of Timanthes, as contained in the words, "*decere*," "*pro dignitate*," and "*digne*," in the passages of Tully, Quintilian, and Pliny *; they ascribe

* Cicero, *Oratore*, 73. seq. — In alioque ponatur, aliudque totum sit, utrum *decere* an *oportere* dicas; *oportere* enim, perfectionem declarat officii, quo et semper utendum est, et omnibus: *decere*, quasi aptum esse, consentaneumque tempori et personæ; quod cum in factis sæpissime, tum in dictis valet, in vultu denique, et gestu, et incessu. Contraque item *dedecere*. Quod si poeta fugit, ut maximum vitium, qui peccat, etiam, cum probam orationem affingit improbo, stultove sapientis: si denique pictor ille vidit, cum immolanda Iphigenia tristis Calchas esset, mœstior Ulysses, mœreret Menelaus, obvolvendum caput Agamemnonis

to impotence what was the forbearance of judgment; Timanthes felt like a father; he did not hide the face of Agamemnon because it was beyond the power of his art, not because it was beyond the *possibility*, but because it was beyond the *dignity* of expression, because the inspiring feature of paternal affection at that moment, and the action which of necessity must have accompanied it, would either have destroyed the grandeur of the character and the solemnity of the scene, or subjected the painter, with the majority of his judges, to the imputation of insensibility. He must either have represented him in tears, or convulsed at the flash of the raised dagger, forgetting the chief in the father, or shown him absorbed by despair, and in that state of stupefaction which levels all features, and deadens expression; he might, indeed, have chosen a fourth mode, he might have exhibited him fainting and palsied in the arms of his attendants, and by this confusion of male and female character merited the applause of every theatre at Paris. But Timanthes had too true a sense of nature to expose a father's feelings, or to tear a passion to rags; nor had the Greeks yet learnt of Rome to steel the face. If he made Agamemnon bear his calamity as a man, he made him also feel it as a man. It became the leader of Greece to sanction the ceremony with his presence

esse, quoniam summum illum luctum penicillo, non posset imitari: si denique histrio, quid deceat quærit: quid faciendum oratori putemus?

M. F. Quintilianus, l. ii. c. 14. — Operienda sunt quædam, sive ostendi non debent, sive exprimi *pro dignitate* non possunt: ut fecit Timanthes, ut opinor, Cithnius, in ea tabula qua Coloten Tejum vicit. Nam cum in Iphigeniæ immolatione pinxisset tristem Calchantem, tristiorem Ulyssem, addidisset Menelao quem summum poterat ars efficere mœrorem, consumptis affectibus, non reperiens quo *dignè* modo Patris vultum possit exprimere, velavit ejus caput, et sui cuique animo dedit æstimandum.

It is evident to the slightest consideration, that both Cicero and Quintilian lose sight of their premises, and contradict themselves in the motive they ascribe to Timanthes. Their want of acquaintance with the nature of plastic expression made them imagine the face of Agamemnon beyond the power of the artist. They were not aware that by making him waste expression on inferior actors at the expense of a principal one, they call him an improvident spendthrift, and not a wise economist.

From Valerius Maximus, who calls the subject "Luctuosum *immolatæ* Iphigeniæ sacrificium" instead of *immolandæ*, little can be expected to the purpose. Pliny, with the *dignè* of Quintilian, has the same confusion of motive.

it did not become the father to see his daughter beneath the dagger's point. The same nature that threw a real mantle over the face of Timoleon, when he assisted at the punishment of his brother, taught Timanthes to throw an imaginary one over the face of Agamemnon; neither height nor depth, *propriety* of expression was his aim.

The critic grants that the expedient of Timanthes may be allowed in "instances of blood," the supported aspect of which would change a scene of commiseration and terror into one of abomination and horror, which ought for ever to be excluded from the province of art, of poetry, as well as painting; and would not the face of Agamemnon, uncovered, have had this effect? was not the scene he must have witnessed a scene of blood? and whose blood was to be shed? that of his own daughter — and what daughter? young beautiful, helpless, innocent, resigned, — the very idea of resignation in such a victim, must either have acted irresistibly to procure her relief, or thrown a veil over a father's face. A man who is determined to sport wit at the expense of heart alone could call such an expedient ridiculous — "as ridiculous," Mr. Falconet continues, "as a poet would be, who, in a pathetic situation, instead of satisfying my expectation, to rid himself of the business, should say that the sentiments of his hero are so far above whatever can be said on the occasion, that he shall say nothing." And has not Homer, though he does not tell us this, acted upon a similar principle? has he not, when Ulysses addresses Ajax in Hades, in the most pathetic and conciliatory manner, instead of furnishing him with an answer, made him remain in indignant silence during the address, then turn his step and stalk away? Has not the universal voice of genuine criticism with Longinus told us, — and if it had not, would not nature's own voice tell us, — that that silence was characteristic, that it precluded, included, and soaring above all answer consigned Ulysses for ever to a sense of inferiority? Nor is it necessary to render such criticism contemptible, to mention the silence of Dido in Virgil, or the Niobe of Æschylus, who was introduced veiled, and continued mute during her presence on the stage.

But in hiding Agamemnon's face, Timanthes loses the honour of invention, as he is merely the imitator of Euri-

pides, who did it before him? * I am not prepared with chronologic proofs to decide whether Euripides or Timanthes, who were contemporaries, about the period of the Peloponnesian war, fell first on this expedient; though the silence of Pliny and Quintilian on that head seems to be in favour of the painter, neither of whom could be ignorant of the celebrated drama of Euripides and would not willingly have suffered the honour of this master-stroke of an art they were so much better acquainted with than painting, to be transferred to another from its real author, had the poet's claim been prior: nor shall I urge that the picture of Timanthes was crowned with victory by those who were in daily habits of assisting at the dramas of Euripides, without having their verdict impeached by Colotes, or his friends, who would not have failed to avail themselves of so flagrant a proof of inferiority as the want of invention in the work of his rival. I shall only ask, what is invention? If it be the combination of the most important moment of a fact with the most varied effects of the reigning passion on the characters introduced — the invention of Timanthes consisted in showing, by the gradation of that passion in the faces of the assistant mourners, the *reason why that of the principal* one *was hid.* This he performed, and this the poet, whether prior or subsequent, did not, and could not do, but left it with a silent appeal to our own mind and fancy. †

In presuming to differ on the propriety of this mode of expression in the picture of Timanthes from the respectable authority I have quoted, I am far from a wish to invalidate the equally pertinent and acute remarks made on the danger

* It is observed by an ingenious critic, that in the tragedy of Euripides, the procession is described, and upon Iphigenia's looking back on her father, he groans, and hides his face to conceal his tears; whilst the picture gives the moment that precedes the sacrifice, and the hiding has a different object, and arises from another impression.

——————— ὡς δ'ἐσειδεν Αγαμεμνων αναξ
ἐπι σφαγας στειχουσαν εἰς ἀλσος κορην
ἀνεστεναξε. Καμπαλιν στρεψας καρα
Δακρυα προηγεν, ὀμματων πεπλον προθεις.

† It may be questioned whether, under the circumstances, Agamemnon could have been represented in any other way. Notwithstanding his conviction that his attendance was necessary to sanction the deed, he could not look upon it; it would be unnatural. — W.

of its imitation, though I am decidedly of opinion that it is strictly within the limits of our art. If it be a "trick," it is certainly one that "has served more than once." We find it adopted to express the grief of a beautiful female figure on a basso-rilievo formerly in the palace Valle at Rome, and preserved in the Admiranda of S. Bartoli; it is used, though with his own originality, by Michelangelo in the figure of Abijam, to mark unutterable woe; Raphael, to show that he thought it the best possible mode of expressing remorse and the deepest sense of repentance, borrowed it in the Expulsion from Paradise, without any alteration, from Masaccio; and, like him, turned Adam out with both his hands before his face.* And how has he represented Moses at the burning bush, to express the astonished awe of human in the visible presence of divine nature? by a double repetition of the same expedient; once in the ceiling of a Stanza, and again in the loggia of the Vatican, with both his hands before his face, or rather with his face immersed in his hands. As we cannot suspect in the master of expression the unworthy motive of making use of this mode merely to avoid a difficulty, or to denote the insupportable splendour of the vision, which was so far from being the case, that, according to the sacred record, Moses stepped out of his way to examine the ineffectual blaze: we must conclude that nature herself dictated to him this method as superior to all he could express by features; and that he recognised the same dictate in Masaccio, who can no more be supposed to have been acquainted with the precedent of Timanthes than Shakspere with that of Euripides, when he made Macduff draw his hat over his face.

Masaccio and Raphael proceeded on the principle, Gherard Lairesse copied only the image of Timanthes, and has perhaps incurred by it the charge of what Longinus calls *parenthyrsos*, in the ill-timed application of supreme pathos to an inadequate call. Agamemnon is introduced covering his face with his mantle, at the death of Polyxena, the captive daughter of Priam, sacrificed to the manes of Achilles, her be-

* It was made use of also by Polygnotus long before either Timanthes or Euripides. In the Destruction of Troy, in the *Lesche* at Delphi, an infant is represented holding his hands before his eyes, to escape the horrors of the scene. Pausanias, x. 26. — W.

trothed lover, treacherously slain in the midst of the nuptial ceremony by her brother Paris. The death of Polyxena, whose charms had been productive of the greatest disaster that could befall the Grecian army, could not perhaps provoke in its leader emotions similar to those which he felt at that of his own daughter: it must, however, be owned that the figure of the chief is equally dignified and pathetic; and that, by the introduction of the spectre of Achilles at the immolation of the damsel to his manes, the artist's fancy has in some degree atoned for the want of discrimination in the professor.

Such were the artists, who, according to the most corresponding data, formed the style of that second period, which fixed the end and established the limits of art, on whose firm basis arose the luxuriant fabric of the third or the period of refinement, which added grace and polish to the forms it could not surpass; amenity or truth to the tones it could not invigorate; magic and imperceptible transition to the abrupt division of masses; gave depth and roundness to composition; at the breast of nature herself caught the passions as they rose, and familiarised expression. The period of Apelles, Protogenes, Aristides, Euphranor, Pausias, the pupils of Pamphilus and his master Eupompus, whose authority obtained what had not been granted to his great predecessor and countryman Polycletus, the new establishment of the school of Sicyon.*

The leading principle of Eupompus may be traced in the advice which he gave to Lysippus (as preserved by Pliny), whom, when consulted in a standard of imitation, he directed to the contemplation of human variety in the multitude of the characters that were passing by, with the axiom, "that nature herself was to be imitated, not an artist." Excellence, said Eupompus, is thy aim, such excellence as that of Phidias and Polycletus; but it is not obtained by the servile imitation of works, however perfect, without mounting to the principle which raised them to that height; that principle apply to thy purpose,—there fix thy aim. He who, with the same freedom of access to nature as another man, contents himself to approach her only through his medium, has resigned his birthright and originality together his master's

* Pliny, l. xxxv. c. 18.

manner will be his style. If Phidias and Polycletus have discovered the substance and established the permanent principle of the human frame, they have not exhausted the variety of human appearances and human character; if they have abstracted the forms of majesty and those of beauty, nature, compared with their works, will point out a grace that has been left for thee; if they have pre-occupied man as he *is*, be thine to give him that air with which he actually *appears*.*

Such was the advice of Eupompus: less lofty, less ambitious than what the departed epoch of genius would have dictated, but better suited to the times, and better to his pupil's mind. When the spirit of liberty forsook the public, grandeur had left the private mind of Greece: subdued by Philip, the gods of Athens and Olympia had migrated to Pella, and Alexander was become the representative of Jupiter; still those who had lost the substance fondled the shadow of liberty; rhetoric mimicked the thunders of oratory, sophistry and metaphysic debate that philosophy which had guided life, and the grand taste that had dictated to art the monumental style, invested gods with human form and raised individuals to heroes, began to give way to refinements in appreciating the degrees of elegance or of resemblance in imitation: the advice of Eupompus, however, far from implying the abolition of the old system, recalled his pupil to the examen of the great principle on which it had established its excellence, and to the resources which its inexhaustible variety offered for new combinations.

That Lysippus considered it in that light, his devotion to the Doryphorus of Polycletus, known even to Tully, sufficiently proved. That figure which comprised the pure proportions of juvenile vigour furnished the readiest application for those additional refinements of variety, character, and

* This speech is supplied by Fuseli himself, as the following extract shows, for it is its only source. — W. "Lysippum Sicyonium — audendi rationem cepisse pictoris Eupompi responso. Eum enim interrogatum, quem sequeretur antecedentium, dixisse demonstrata hominum multitudine, naturam ipsam imitandam esse, non artificem. Non habet Latinum nomen symmetria, quam diligentissime custodivit, nova intactaque ratione quadratas veterum staturas permutando; Vulgoque dicebat, ab illis factos, quales essent, homines: à se quales viderentur esse." Plin. xxxiv. 8.

fleshy charms that made the base of his invention: its symmetry directing his researches amid the insidious play of accidental charms, and the claims of inherent grace, never suffered imitation to deviate into incorrectness; whilst its squareness and elemental beauty melted in more familiar forms on the eye, and from an object of cold admiration became the glowing one of sympathy. Such was probably the method formed by Lysippus on the advice of Eupompus, more perplexed than explained by the superficial extract and the rapid phrase of Pliny.

From the statuary's we may form an idea of the painter's method. The doctrine of Eupompus was adopted by Pamphilus the Amphipolitan, the most scientific artist of his time, and by him communicated to Apelles of Cos, or, as Lucian will have it, of Ephesus*, his pupil, in whom, if we believe tradition, nature exhibited, *once*, a specimen what her union with education and circumstances could produce. The name of Apelles in Pliny is the synonyme of unrivalled and unattainable excellence; but the enumeration of his works points out the modification which we ought to apply to that superiority; it neither comprises exclusive sublimity of invention, the most acute discrimination of character, the widest sphere of comprehension, the most judicious and best balanced composition, nor the deepest pathos of expression: his great prerogative consisted more in the unison than in the extent of his powers; he knew better what he could do, what ought to be done, at what point he could arrive, and what lay beyond his reach, than any other artist. Grace of conception and refinement of taste were his elements, and went hand in hand with grace of execution and taste in finish; powerful and seldom possessed singly, irresistible when united: that he built both on the firm basis of the former system, not on its subversion, his well-known contest of lines with Protogenes, not a legendary tale, but a well-attested fact, irrefragably proves: what those lines were,

* Μαλλον δε 'Απελλης ὁ 'Εφεσιος παλαι ταυτην προυλαβε την εἰκονα· Και γαρ αὐ και οὑτος διαβληθεις π,ος Πτολεμαιον.

Λουκιανού περι του μ. ρ. Π. Δ.[1]

[1] Lucian refers to a painter who lived at the court of Ptolemy Philopator, a century after Apelles of Cos. See note, *ante*. — W.

drawn with nearly miraculous subtlety in different colours, one upon the other, or rather within each other, it would be equally unavailing and useless to inquire; but the corollaries we may deduce from the contest are obviously these, that the schools of Greece recognised all one elemental principle; that acuteness and fidelity of eye and obedience of hand form precision; precision, proportion; proportion, beauty: that it is the "little more or less," imperceptible to vulgar eyes, which constitutes grace, and establishes the superiority of one artist over another: that the knowledge of the degrees of things, or taste, presupposes a perfect knowledge of the things themselves: that colour, grace, and taste are ornaments, not substitutes of form, expression, and character, and when they usurp that title, degenerate into splendid faults.

Such were the principles on which Apelles formed his Venus, or rather the personification of female grace, the wonder of art, the despair of artists; whose outline baffled every attempt at emendation, whilst imitation shrunk from the purity, the force, the brilliancy, the evanescent gradations of her tints.*

The refinements of the art were, by Aristides of Thebes, applied to the mind. The passions which tradition had organised for Timanthes, Aristides caught as they rose from the breast, or escaped from the lips of nature herself; his volume was man, his scene society: he drew the subtle discriminations of mind in every stage of life, the whispers, the simple cry of passion and its most complex accents. Such, as history informs us, was the suppliant whose voice you seemed to hear, such his sick man's half-extinguished eye and labouring breast, such Byblis expiring in the pangs of love, and, above all, the half-slain mother, shuddering lest the eager babe should suck the blood from her palsied nipple. This picture was probably at Thebes when Alexander sacked that town; what his feelings were when he saw it, we may guess from his sending it to Pella. Its expression, poised between the anguish of maternal affection and the pangs of death, gives to commiseration an image, which neither the infant, piteously caressing

* Apelles was probably the inventor of what artists call *glazing*. See Reynolds on Du Fresnoy, note 37. vol. ii.

his slain mother in the group of Epigonus*, nor the absorbed feature of the Niobe, nor the struggle of the Laocoon, excites. Timanthes had marked the limits that discriminate terror from the excess of horror; Aristides drew the line that separates it from disgust. His subject is one of those that touch the ambiguous line of a squeamish sense. Taste and smell, as sources of tragic emotion, and in consequence of their power, commanding gesture, seem scarcely admissible in art or on the theatre, because their extremes are nearer allied to disgust, and loathsome or risible ideas, than to terror. The prophetic trance of Cassandra, who scents the prepared murder of Agamemnon at the threshold of the ominous hall; the desperate moan of Macbeth's queen, on seeing the visionary spot still uneffaced infect her hand, — are images snatched from the lap of terror, — but soon would cease to be so, were the artist or the actress to enforce the dreadful hint with indiscreet expression or gesture. This, completely understood by Aristides, was as completely missed by his imitators, Raphael†, in the *Morbetto*, and Poussin, in his Plague of the Philistines.‡ In the group of Aristides, our sympathy is immediately interested by the mother, still alive, though mortally wounded, helpless, beautiful, and forgetting herself in the anguish for her child, whose situation still suffers hope to mingle with our fears; he is only approaching the nipple of the mother. In the group of Raphael, the mother dead of the plague, herself an object of apathy, becomes one of disgust, by the action of the man, who, bending over her, at his utmost reach of arm, with one hand removes the child from the breast, whilst the other, applied to his nostrils, bars the effluvia of death. Our feelings, alienated from the mother, come too late even for the child, who, by his languor, already betrays the mortal symptoms of the poison he imbibed at the parent corpse. It is curious to observe the permutation of ideas which takes place, as imitation is removed from the sources of nature: Poussin, not content with adopting the group of Raphael,

* In matri interfectæ infante miserabiliter blandiente. Plin. l. xxxiv. c. 9.

† A design of Raphael, representing the lues of the Trojans in Creta, known by the print of Marc Antonio Raimondi.

‡ In the National Gallery. — W.

once more repeats the loathsome attitude in the same scene; he forgot, in his eagerness to render the idea of contagion still more intuitive, that he was averting our feelings with ideas of disgust.

The refinements of expression were carried still farther by the disciple of Aristides, Euphranor, the Isthmian, who excelled equally as painter and statuary, if we may form our judgment from the Theseus he opposed to that of Parrhasius, and the bronze figure of Alexander Paris, in whom, says Pliny*, the umpire of the goddesses, the lover of Helen, and yet the murderer of Achilles might be traced. This account, which is evidently a quotation of Pliny's, and not the assumed verdict of a connoisseur, has been translated with an emphasis it does not admit of, to prove that an attempt to express different qualities or passions at once in the same object, must naturally tend to obliterate the effect of each "Pliny," says our critic, "observes, that in a statue of Paris, by Euphranor, you might discover at the same time three different characters: the dignity of a judge of the goddesses, the lover of Helen, and the conqueror of Achilles. A statue in which you endeavour to unite stately dignity, youthful elegance, and stern valour, must surely possess none of these to any eminent degree." The paraphrase, it is first to be observed, lends itself the mixtures to Pliny it disapproves of; we look in vain for the coalition of "stately dignity, stern valour, and youthful elegance," in the Paris *he* describes: the murderer of Achilles was not his conqueror. But may not dignity, elegance, and valour, or any other not irreconcilable qualities, be visible at once in a figure without destroying the primary feature of its character, or impairing its expression? Let us appeal to the Apollo. Is he not a figure of character and expression, and does he not possess all three in a supreme degree? Will it imply mediocrity of conception or confusion of character, if we were to say that his countenance, attitude, and form combine divine majesty, enchanting grace, and lofty indignation? Yet not all three, one ideal whole irradiated the mind of the artist who conceived the divine semblance. He

* Reynolds' Disc. V. vol. i. p. 120. "Euphranoris Alexander Paris est: in quo laudatur quod omnia simul intelligantur, judex dearum, amator Helenæ, et tamen Achillis interfector." Plin. l. xxxiv. 8.

gave, no doubt, the preference of expression to the action in which the god is engaged, or rather, from the accomplishment of which he recedes with lofty and contemptuous ease. This was the first impression which he meant to make upon us: but what contemplation stops here? what hinders us, when we consider the beauty of these features, the harmony of these forms, to find in them the abstract of all his other qualities, to roam over the whole history of his achievements? we see him enter the celestial synod, and all the gods rise at his august appearance*; we see him sweep the plain after Daphne; precede Hector with the ægis, and disperse the Greeks; strike Patroclus with his palm and decide his destiny. And is the figure frigid because its great idea is inexhaustible? might we not say the same of the Infant Hercules of Zeuxis or of Reynolds? Did not the idea of the man inspire the hand that framed the mighty child? his magnitude, his crushing grasp, his energy of will, are only the germ, the prelude of the power that rid the earth of monsters, and which our mind pursues. Such was, no doubt, the Paris of Euphranor: he made his character so pregnant, that those who knew his history might trace in it the origin of all his future feats, though first impressed by the expression allotted to the predominant quality and moment. The acute inspector, the elegant umpire of female form receiving the contested pledge with a dignified pause, or with enamoured eagerness presenting it to the arbitress of his destiny, was probably the predominant idea of the figure; whilst the deserter of Oenone, the seducer of Helen, the subtle archer, that future murderer of Achilles, lurked under the insidious eyebrow, and in the penetrating glance of beauty's chosen minion. Such appeared to me the character and expression of the sitting Paris in the voluptuous Phrygian dress, formerly in the cortile of the palace Altheims, at Rome. A figure, nearly colossal, which many of you may remember, and a faint idea of whom may be gathered from the print among those in the collection published of the Museum Clementinum: a work, in my opinion, of the highest style, and worthy of Euphranor, though I shall not venture to call it a repetition in marble of his bronze.

From these observations on the collateral and unsolicited

* See the Hymn (ascribed to Homer) on Apollo.

beauties which must branch out from the primary expression of every great idea, it will not, I hope, be suspected, that I mean to invalidate the necessity of its unity, or to be the advocate of pedantic subdivision. All such division diminishes, all such mixtures impair the simplicity and clearness of expression: in the group of the Laocoon, the frigid ecstacies of German criticism have discovered pity, like a vapour, swimming on the father's eyes; he is seen to suppress in the groan for his children the shriek for himself, — his nostrils are drawn upward to express indignation at unworthy sufferings, whilst he is said at the same time to implore celestial help: to these are added the winged effects of the serpent-poison, the writhings of the body, the spasms of the extremities. To the miraculous organisation of such expression, Agesander, the sculptor of the Laocoon, was too wise to lay claim. His figure is a class; it characterises every beauty of virility verging on age; the prince, the priest, the father, are visible, but, absorbed in the man, serve only to dignify the victim of *one* great expression; though poised by the artist, for us to apply the compass to the face of the Laocoon, is to measure the wave fluctuating in the storm: this tempestuous front, this contracted nose, the immersion of these eyes, and, above all, that long-drawn mouth, are separate and united, seats of convulsion, features of nature struggling within the jaws of death.

Lecture II. — Art of the Moderns.

Introduction — different direction of the art. Preparative style — Masaccio — Leonardo da Vinci. Style of establishment — Michelangelo, Raphael, Titian, Correggio. Style of refinement, and depravation. Schools — of Tuscany, Rome, Venice, Lombardy. The Eclectic School — Machinists. The German School — Albert Durer. The Flemish School — Rubens. The Dutch School — Rembrandt. Observations on art in Switzerland. The French School. The Spanish School. England — Conclusion.

In the preceding discourse I have endeavoured to impress you with the general features of ancient art in its different periods of preparation, establishment, and refinement. We

are now arrived at the epoch of its restoration in the fifteenth century of our era, when religion and wealth, rousing emulation, reproduced its powers, but gave to their exertion a very different direction. The reigning church found itself indeed under the necessity of giving more splendour to the temples and mansions destined to receive its votaries, of subduing their senses with the charm of appropriate images and the exhibition of events and actions, which might stimulate their zeal and inflame their hearts; but the sacred mysteries of Divine Being, the method adopted by Revelation, the duties its doctrine imposed, the virtues it demanded from its followers, faith, resignation, humility, sufferings, substituted a medium of art as much inferior to the resources of Paganism in a physical sense as incomparably superior in a spiritual one. Those public customs, that perhaps as much tended to spread the infections of vice as they facilitated the means of art, were no more; the heroism of the Christian and his beauty were internal, and powerful or exquisite forms allied him no longer exclusively to his God. The chief repertory of the artist, the sacred records, furnished indeed a sublime cosmogony, scenes of patriarchal simplicity and a poetic race, which left nothing to regret in the loss of heathen mythology; but the stem of the nation whose history is its exclusive theme, if it abounded in the characters and powers fit for the exhibition of passions, did not teem with forms sufficiently exalted to inform the artist and elevate the art. Ingredients of a baser cast mingled their alloy with the materials of grandeur and of beauty. Monastic legend and the rubric of martyrology claimed more than a legitimate share from the labours of the pencil and the chisel, made nudity the exclusive property of emaciated hermits or decrepit age, and if the breast of manhood was allowed to bare its vigour, or beauty to expand her bosom, the antidotes of terror and of horror were ready at their side to check the apprehended infection of their charms. When we add to this the heterogeneous stock on which the reviving system of arts was grafted, a race indeed inhabiting a genial climate, but itself the fæces of barbarity, the remnants of Gothic adventurers, humanised only by the cross, mouldering amid the ruins of the temples they had demolished, the battered fragments of the images their rage had crushed,—

when we add this, I say, we shall less wonder at the languor of modern art in its rise and progress, than be astonished at the vigour by which it adapted and raised materials partly so unfit and defective, partly so contaminated, to the magnificent system which we are to contemplate.

Sculpture had already produced respectable specimens of its reviving powers in the basso-rilievos of Lorenzo Ghiberti, some works of Donato, and the Christ of Philippo Brunelleschi*, when the first symptoms of imitation appeared in the frescoes of Tommaso da San Giovanni, commonly called Masaccio, from the total neglect of his appearance and person.† Masaccio first conceived that parts are to constitute a whole; that composition ought to have a centre; expression, truth; and execution, unity: his line deserves attention, though his subjects led him not to investigation of form‡, and the shortness of his life forbade his extending those elements which Raphael, nearly a century afterward, carried to perfection — it is sufficiently glorious for him to have been more than once copied by that great master of expression, and in some degree to have been the herald of his style: Masaccio lives more in the figure of Paul preaching on the Areopágus§, of the celebrated cartoon in our possession, and in the borrowed figure of Adam expelled from paradise in the loggia of the Vatican, than in his own mutilated or retouched remains.

The essays of Masaccio in imitation and expression, Andrea Mantegna‖ attempted to unite with form; led by the

* See the account of this in Vasari; vita di P. Brunelleschi, tom. ii. 114. It is of wood, and still exists in the chapel of the family Gondi, in the church of Santa Maria Novella. I know that near a century before Donato, Giotto is said to have worked in marble two basso-rilievoes on the campanile of the cathedral of Florence; they probably excel the style of his pictures as much as the bronze works executed by Andrea Pisani, from his designs, at the door of the Battisterio.

† Masaccio da San Giovanni di Valdarno, born in 1402, is said to have died in 1443. He was the pupil of Masolino da Panicale.

‡ Masaccio was unquestionably superior in form to all his predecessors, and was indeed the first painter who attempted an expression of the individuality of form.—W.

§ This figure is now attributed to Filippino Lippi, the son of Fra Filippo.—W.

‖ Andrea Mantegna died at Mantua, 1505. A monument erected to his memory in 1517, by his sons, gave rise to the mistake of dating his death from that period.

contemplation of the antique, fragments of which he ambitiously scattered over his works: though a Lombard, and born prior to the discovery of the best ancient statues, he seems to have been acquainted with a variety of characters, from forms that remind us of the Apollo, Mercury or Meleager, down to the fauns and satyrs; but his taste was too crude, his fancy too grotesque, and his comprehension too weak to advert from the parts that remained to the whole that inspired them: hence in his figures of dignity or beauty we see not only the meagre forms of common models, but even their defects tacked to ideal Torsos; and his fauns and satyrs, instead of native luxuriance of growth and the sportive appendages of mixed being, are decorated with heraldic excrescences and arabesque absurdity. His triumphs are known to you all *; they are a copious inventory of classic lumber, swept together with more industry than taste, but full of valuable materials. Of expression he was not ignorant his burial of Christ furnished Raphael with the composition, and some of the features and attitudes in his picture on the same subject in the palace of the Borgheses, — the figure of St. John, however, left out by Raphael, proves that Mantegna sometimes mistook grimace for the highest degree of grief. His oil-pictures exhibit little more than the elaborate anguish of missal-painting; his frescoes, destroyed at the construction of the Clementime museum, had freshness, freedom, and imitation.

To Luca Signorelli, of Cortona†, nature more than atoned for the want of those advantages which the study of the antique had offered to Andrea Mantegna. He seems to have been the first who contemplated with a discriminating eye his object, saw what was accident and what essential; balanced light and shade, and decided the motion of his figures. He foreshortened with equal boldness and intelligence, and thence it is, probably, that Vasari fancies to have discovered, in the Last Judgment of Michelangelo, traces of imitation from the Lunetta, painted by Luca, in the church of the

* This is the Triumph of Julius Cæsar, painted in distemper, and now at Hampton Court; these nine Cartoons were executed for Lodovico Gonzaga, duke of Mantua, about the year 1490, after Mantegna's return from Rome. — W.

† Luca Signorelli died at Cortona 1521, aged 82.

Madonna, at Orvietto; but the powers which animated him there, and before at Arezzo, are no longer visible in the Gothic medley with which he filled two compartments in the chapel of Sixtus IV. at Rome.*

Such was the dawn of modern art, when Leonardo da Vinci† broke forth with a splendour which distanced former excellence: made up of all the elements that constitute the essence of genius, favoured by education and circumstances, all ear, all eye, all grasp; painter, poet, sculptor, anatomist, architect, engineer, chemist, machinist, musician, man of science, and sometimes empiric‡, he laid hold of every beauty in the enchanted circle, but without exclusive attach-

* That is, the Sistine Chapel. These pictures represent — the Return of Moses on his divine mission to Egypt; and the Death of Moses: they are early works of the painter, as they were executed shortly after 1473, for Sixtus IV., in competition for a prize with Sandro Botticelli, Domenico Ghirlandajo, Don Bartolomeo, Pietro Perugino, and Cosimo Roselli. Cosimo, though probably the worst painter, proved the best man of the world. Knowing that Sixtus would decide for himself, he coloured his works very highly, sparing neither ultramarine nor gold, and, as he had foreseen, the pope, attracted by his gay colouring and gilding, awarded him the prize, and in addition ordered the others to improve their works, at the same time upbraiding them for not using finer colours. —W.

† Leonardo da Vinci is said to have died in 1517, aged 75, at Paris. [Leonardo died at Cloux, near Amboise, May 2, 1519, in his 67th year. —W.]

‡ The flying birds of paste, the lions filled with lilies, the lizards with dragons' wings, horned and silvered over, savour equally of the boy and the quack. It is singular enough that there exists not the smallest hint of Lorenzo de Medici having employed or noticed a man of such powers and such early celebrity; the legend which makes him go to Rome with Juliano de Medici at the access of Leo X., to accept employment in the Vatican, whether sufficiently authentic or not, furnishes a characteristic trait of the man. The Pope passing through the room allotted for the pictures, and instead of designs and cartoons, finding nothing but an apparatus of distillery, of oils and varnishes, exclaimed, *Oimè, costui non è ver far nulla, da che comincia a pensare alla fine innanzi il principio dell' opera!* From an admirable sonnet of Leonardo, preserved by Lomazzo, he appears to have been sensible of the inconstancy of his own temper, and full of wishes, at least, to correct it.

Much has been said of the honour he received by expiring in the arms of Francis I. It was indeed an honour, by which destiny in some degree atoned to that monarch for his future disaster at Pavia. [This story appears to be a mere rumour; the court of Francis was, at the time of Leonardo's death, at St. Germain, and no journey was undertaken on

ment to one, dismissed in her turn each. Fitter to scatter hints than to teach by example, he wasted life, insatiate, in experiment. To a capacity which at once penetrated the principle and real aim of the art, he joined an inequality of fancy that at one moment lent him wings for the pursuit of beauty, and the next, flung him on the ground to crawl after deformity: we owe him chiaroscuro with all its magic; we owe him caricature with all its incongruities. His notions of the most elaborate finish and his want of perseverance were at least equal:—want of perseverance alone could make him abandon his cartoon destined for the great council-chamber at Florence, of which the celebrated contest of horsemen was but one group; for to him who could organise that composition, Michelangelo himself ought rather to have been an object of emulation than of fear; and that he was able to organise it, we may be certain from the remaining imperfect sketch in the "Etruria Pittrice;" but still more from the admirable print of it by Edelinck, after a drawing of Rubens, who was Leonardo's great admirer, and has said much to impress us with the beauties of his Last Supper in the refectory of the Dominicans at Milano, the only one of his great works which he carried to ultimate finish, through all his parts, from the head of Christ to the least important one: it perished soon after him, and we can estimate the loss only from the copies that survive.*

Bartolomeo della Porta, or di S. Marco, the last master of this period†, first gave gradation to colour, form, and masses to drapery, and a grave dignity, till then unknown, to execution. If he were not endowed with the versatility and comprehension of Leonardo, his principles were less mixed with base matter, and less apt to mislead him. As a member of a religious order, he confined himself to subjects and characters of piety; but the few nudities which he allowed himself to exhibit show sufficient intelligence and still more style: he fore-shortened with truth and boldness, and whenever the figure did admit of it, made his drapery the vehicle

that day, May 2. 1519. See Amoretti, *Memorie Storiche su la Vita, gli Studj, e le opere di Leonardo da Vinci.* Milan, 1804. — W.]

* The best, that of Marco d' Oggione, is now in the possession of the Royal Academy. — W.

† Frà Bartolomeo died at Florence 1517, at the age of 48.

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of the limb it invests. He was the true master of Raphael, whom his tuition weaned from the meanness of Pietro Perugino, and prepared for the mighty style of Michelangelo Buonarroti.

Sublimity of conception, grandeur of form, and breadth of manner are the elements of Michelangelo's style.* By these principles he selected or rejected the objects of imitation. As painter, as sculptor, as architect, he attempted, and above any other man succeeded, to unite magnificence of plan and endless variety of subordinate parts with the utmost simplicity and breadth. His line is uniformly grand: character and beauty were admitted only as far as they could be made subservient to grandeur. The child, the female, meanness, deformity, were by him indiscriminately stamped with grandeur. A beggar rose from his hand the patriarch of poverty; the hump of his dwarf is impressed with dignity; his women are moulds of generation; his infants teem with the man; his men are a race of giants. This is the "terribil via" hinted at by Agostino Carracci, though perhaps as little understood by the Bolognese as by the blindest of his Tuscan adorers, with Vasari at their head. To give the appearance of perfect ease to the most perplexing difficulty was the exclusive power of Michelangelo. He is the inventor of epic painting, in that sublime circle of the Sistine Chapel which exhibits the origin, the progress, and the final dispensations of theocracy. He has personified motion in the groups of the cartoon of Pisa; embodied sentiment on the monuments of San Lorenzo, unravelled the features of meditation in the Prophets and Sibyls of the Sistine Chapel; and in the Last Judgment, with every attitude that varies the human body, traced the master-trait of every passion that sways the human heart. Though as sculptor, he expressed the character of flesh more perfectly than all who went before or came after him, yet he never submitted to copy an individual; Julio the second only excepted, and in him he represented the reigning passion rather than the man.† In painting he contented him-

* Michelangelo Buonarroti, born at Catel-Caprese in 1474, died at Rome 1564, aged 90. [He died Feb. 17. 1564, and as he lived 88 years, 11 months and 15 days, he was born March 6. 1475. — W.]

† Like Silanion — "Apollodorum fecit, fictorem et ipsum, sed inter cunctos diligentissimum artis et inimicum sui judicem, crebro perfecta

self with a negative colour, and as the painter of mankind, rejected all meretricious ornament.* The fabric of St. Peter, scattered into infinity of jarring parts by Bramante and his successors, he concentrated; suspended the cupola, and to the most complex gave the air of the most simple of edifices. Such, take him all in all, was Michelangelo, the salt of art: sometimes he no doubt had his moments of dereliction, deviated into manner, or perplexed the grandeur of his forms with futile and ostentatious anatomy: both met with armies of copyists; and it has been his fate to have been censured for their folly.

The inspiration of Michelangelo was followed by the milder genius of Raphael†, the father of dramatic painting;

signa frangentem, dum satiare cupiditatem nequit artis, et ideo insanum cognominatum. Hoc in eo expressit, nec hominem ex ære fecit sed Iracundiam." Plin. l. xxxiv. 7.

* When Michelangelo pronounced oil-painting to be *Arte da donna e da huomini agiati e infingardi*, a maxim to which the fierce Venetian manner has given an air of paradox, he spoke relatively to fresco: it was a lash on the short-sighted insolence of Sebastian del Piombo, who wanted to persuade Paul III. to have the Last Judgment painted in oil. That he had a sense for the beauties of oil-colour, its glow, its juice, its richness, its pulp, the praises which he lavished on Titian, whom he called the only painter, and his patronage of Fra Sebastiano himself, evidently prove. When young, Michelangelo attempted oil-painting with success; the picture painted for Angelo Doni is an instance, and probably the only entire work of the kind that remains.[1] The Lazarus, in the picture destined for the cathedral at Narbonne, rejects the claim of every other hand. The Leda, the cartoon of which, formerly in the palace of the Vecchietti at Florence, is now in the possession of W. Lock, Esq., was painted in distemper (a tempera); all small or large oil-pictures shown as his, are copies from his designs or cartoons, by Marcello Venusti, Giacopo da Pontormo, Battista Franco, and Sebastian of Venice.

† Raffaello Sanzio, of Urbino, died at Rome 1520, at the age of 37. — [He was born April 6. 1483, and died on Good Friday, April 6. 1520. Vasari, when he stated that Raphael was born and died on Good Friday, forgot that Good Friday was a movable feast. — W.]

[1] This work is in *distemper;* there is no known work in oil colours by the hand of Michelangelo. (Lanzi, *Storia Pittorica*, &c.) The remark about oil-painting was a mere burst of anger against Sebastiano del Piombo, who had earned his reputation by oil-painting. This is evident both from the occasion, and from the complete sentence, of which Fuseli has quoted only a part: — "to paint in oil is an art fit only for women, and easy and lazy persons like Fra Sebastiano," — il colorire a olio era arte da donna, e da persone agiate ed infingarde, come Fra Bastiano. — Vasari, *Vita di Sebastiano.* — W.

the painter of humanity; less elevated, less vigorous, but more insinuating, more pressing on our hearts, the warm master of our sympathies. What effect of human connection, what feature of the mind, from the gentlest emotion to the most fervid burst of passion, has been left unobserved, has not received a characteristic stamp from that examiner of man? Michelangelo came to nature, nature came to Raphael — he transmitted her features like a lucid glass, unstained, unmodified. We stand with awe before Michelangelo, and tremble at the height to which he elevates us — we embrace Raphael, and follow him wherever he leads us. Energy, with propriety of character and modest grace, poise his line and determine his correctness. Perfect human beauty he has not represented; no face of Raphael's is perfectly beautiful; no figure of his, in the abstract, possesses the proportions that could raise it to a standard of imitation: form to him was only a vehicle of character or pathos, and to those he adapted it in a mode and with a truth which leaves all attempts at emendation hopeless. His invention connects the utmost stretch of possibility with the most plausible degree of probability, in a manner that equally surprises our fancy, persuades our judgment, and affects our heart. His composition always hastens to the most necessary point as its centre, and from that disseminates, to that leads back as rays, all secondary ones. Group, form, and contrast are subordinate to the event, and common-place ever excluded. His expression, in strict unison with and decided by character, whether calm, animated, agitated, convulsed, or absorbed by the inspiring passion, unmixed and pure, never contradicts its cause, equally remote from tameness and grimace: the moment of his choice never suffers the action to stagnate or to expire; it is the moment of transition, the crisis big with the past and pregnant with the future. — If, separately taken, the line of Raphael has been excelled in correctness, elegance, and energy; his colour far surpassed in tone, and truth, and harmony; his masses in roundness, and his chiaroscuro in effect — considered as instruments of pathos, they have never been equalled; and in composition, invention, expression, and the power of telling a story, he has never been approached.

Whilst the superior principles of the art were receiving

the homage of Tuscany and Rome, the inferior but more alluring charm of colour began to spread its fascination at Venice, from the pallet of Giorgione da Castel Franco *, and irresistibly entranced every eye that approached the magic of Titiano Vecelli of Cador.† To no colourist before or after him, did nature unveil herself with that dignified familiarity in which she appeared to Titian. His organ, universal and equally fit for all her exhibitions, rendered her simplest to her most compound appearances with equal purity and truth. He penetrated the essence and the general principle of the substances before him, and on these established his theory of colour. He invented that breadth of local tint which no imitation has attained, and first expressed the negative nature of shade: his are the charms of glazing, and the mystery of reflexes, by which he detached, rounded, connected, or enriched his objects. His harmony is less indebted to the force of light and shade, or the artifices of contrast, than to a due balance of colour, equally remote from monotony and spots. His backgrounds seem to be dictated by nature. Landscape, whether it be considered as the transcript of a spot, or the rich combination of congenial objects, or as the scene of a phenomenon, dates its origin from him: he is the father of portrait-painting, of resemblance with form, character with dignity, and costume with subordination.

Another charm was yet wanting to complete the round of art — harmony: it appeared with Antonio Lieti ‡, called Correggio, whose works it attended like an enchanted spirit.

* Giorgio Barbarelli, from his size and beauty called Giorgione, was born at Castel Franco, in the territory of Venice, 1478, and died at Venice, 1511. [He was born rather in the neighbourhood of Castel Franco, in 1477.—W.]

† Titiano Vecelli, or, as the Venetians call him, Tiziàn, born at Cador, in the Friulese, died at Venice, 1576, aged 99.

‡ The birth and life of Antonio Allegri, or, as he called himself, Lieti, surnamed Correggio, is more involved in obscurity than the life of Apelles. Whether he was born in 1493 or 1494 is not ascertained; the time of his death in 1534 [March 5.] is more certain. The best account of him has undoubtedly been given by A. R. Mengs in his *Memorie concernenti la vita e le opere di Antonio Allegri denominato il Correggio.* Vol. ii. of his works, published by the Spaniard D. G. Niccola d'Azara. [See on Correggio — Pungileoni, *Memorie Istoriche di Antonio Allegri detto il Correggio.* Parma, 1817–21.—W.]

The harmony and the grace of Correggio are proverbial: the medium which by breadth of gradation unites two opposite principles, the coalition of light and darkness by imperceptible transition, are the element of his style. — This inspires his figures with grace, to this their grace is subordinate: the most appropriate, the most elegant attitudes were adopted, rejected, perhaps sacrificed to the most awkward ones, in compliance with this imperious principle: parts vanished, were absorbed, or emerged in obedience to it. This unison of a whole predominates over all that remains of him, from the vastness of his cupolâs to the smallest of his oil-pictures. — The harmony of Correggio, though assisted by exquisite hues, was entirely independent of colour: his great organ was chiaroscuro in its most extensive sense: compared with the expanse in which he floats, the effects of Leonardo da Vinci are little more than the dying ray of evening, and the concentrated flash of Giorgione discordant abruptness. The bland central light of a globe, imperceptibly gliding through lucid demitints into rich reflected shades, composes the spell of Correggio, and affects us with the soft emotions of a delicious dream.

Such was the ingenuity that prepared, and such the genius that raised to its height the fabric of modern art. Before we proceed to the next epoch, let us make an observation.

Form not your judgment of an artist from the exceptions which his conduct may furnish, from the exertions of accidental vigour, some deviations into other walks, or some unpremeditated flights of fancy, but from the predominant rule of his system, the general principle of his works. The line and style of Titian's design sometimes expand themselves like those of Michelangelo. His Abraham prevented from sacrificing Isaac; his David adoring over the giant-trunk of Goliath; the Friar escaping from the murderer of his companion in the forest, equal in loftiness of conception and style of design, their mighty tone of colour and daring execution: the heads and groups of Raphael's frescoes and portraits sometimes glow and palpitate with the tints of Titian, or coalesce in masses of harmony, and undulate with graces superior to those of Correggio; who in his turn once reached the highest summit of invention, when he embodied silence and personified the mysteries of love in the voluptuous group of Jupiter and Io; and again exceeded all competition

of expression in the divine features of his Ecce-Homo.* But these sudden irradiations, these flashes of power, are only exceptions from their wonted principles; pathos and character own Raphael for their master, colour remains the domain of Titian, and harmony the sovereign mistress of Correggio.

The resemblance which marked the two first periods of ancient and modern art vanishes altogether as we extend our view to the consideration of the third, or that of refinement, and the origin of schools. The pre-eminence of ancient art, as we have observed, was less the result of superior powers than of simplicity of aim and uniformity of pursuit. The Helladic and the Ionian schools appear to have concurred in directing their instruction to the grand principles of form and expression: this was the stamen which they drew out into one immense connected web. The talents that succeeded genius applied and directed their industry and polish to decorate the established system, the refinements of taste, grace, sentiment, colour, grandeur, and expression. The Tuscan, the Roman, the Venetian, and the Lombard schools, whether from incapacity, want of education, of adequate or dignified encouragement, meanness of conception, or all these together, separated, and in a short time substituted the medium for the end. Michelangelo lived to see the electric shock which his design and style had given to art, propagated by the Tuscan and Venetian schools, as the ostentatious vehicle of puny conceits and emblematic quibbles, or the palliative of empty pomp and degraded luxuriance of colour. He had been copied, but was not imitated by Andrea Vannucchi, surnamed Del Sarto, who in his series of pictures on the life of John the Baptist, in preference adopted the meagre style of Albert Dürer.† The

* Now in the National Gallery, but formerly in the Colonna palace at Rome. This picture has much suffered, especially the lower half of it. Mengs is doubtless correct in pronouncing it one of Correggio's early works; it is deficient in those peculiar beauties which characterise Correggio's style. — W.

† Andrea, called Del Sarto, from the occupation of his father who was a tailor, was born at Florence in 1488, and died in that city of the plague, in 1530. The imitation of Albert Dürer, in the frescoes (in chiaroscuro) of the Scalzo, is limited to the adoption of a few figures

artist who appears to have penetrated deepest to his mind was Pelegrino Tibaldi, of Bologna*; celebrated as the painter of the frescoes in the academic institute of that city, and as the architect of the Escurial under Philip II.† The compositions, groups, and single figures of the institute exhibit a singular mixture of extraordinary vigour and puerile imbecility of conception, of character and caricature, of style and manner. Polypheme groping at the mouth of his cave for Ulysses, and Æolus granting him favourable winds, are striking instances of both: than the Cyclops, Michelangelo himself never conceived a form of savage energy, with attitude and limbs more in unison; whilst the god of winds is degraded to a scanty and ludicrous semblance of Thersites, and Ulysses with his companions travestied by the semi-barbarous look and costume of the age of Constantine or Attila; the manner of Michelangelo is the style of Pelegrino Tibaldi; from him Golzius, Hemskerk, and Spranger borrowed the compendium of the Tuscan's peculiarities. With this mighty talent, however, Michelangelo seems not to have been acquainted, but by that unaccountable weakness incident to the greatest powers, and the severe remembrancer of their vanity, he became the superintendant and assistant tutor of the Venetian Sebastiano‡, and of Daniel Ricciarelli, of Volterra§; the first of whom, with an exquisite eye for individual, had no sense for ideal colour, whilst the other rendered great diligence and much anatomical erudition, useless by meagerness of line and sterility of ideas: how far Michelangelo succeeded in initiating either in his principles, the far-famed pictures of the resuscitation

from Dürer's prints, which then attracted notice in Italy; but, says Vasari, Andrea drew them in his *own style*. Andrea was called *Andrea senza Errori* — Andrew without faults; a title acquired by his celebrated frescoes in the Annunciata. See, on this painter, Biadi, *Notizie d'Andrea del Sarto, &c.* Florence, 1830. — W.

* Pelegrino Tibaldi died at Milan in 1592, aged 70. [He was born in 1527, and died about 1600. — W.]

† The Escurial was built by Bautista de Toledo, and Juan de Harrera, 1563–84, and was completed two years before the visit of Tibaldi to Spain. Cean Bermudez, *Diccionario Istorico, &c.* — W.

‡ Sebastiano, afterwards called Del Piombo from the office of the papal signet, died at Rome in 1547, aged 62.

§ Daniel Ricciarelli of Volterra, died in 1566, aged 57.

of Lazarus, by the first, once in the cathedral of Narbonne, and since inspected by us all at the Lyceum here *, and the fresco of the descent from the cross, in the church of La Trinità del Monte, at Rome, by the second, sufficiently evince † : pictures which combine the most heterogeneous principles. The group of Lazarus in Sebastian del Piombo's and that of the women, with the figure of Christ, in Daniel Ricciarelli's, not only breathe the sublime conception that inspired, but the master-hand that shaped them: offsprings of Michelangelo himself, models of expression, style, and breadth, they cast on all the rest an air of inferiority, and only serve to prove the incongruity of partnership between unequal powers; this inferiority, however, is respectable, when compared with the depravations of Michelangelo's style by the remainder of the Tuscan school, especially those of Giorgio Vasari ‡, the most superficial artist and the most abandoned mannerist of his time, but the most acute observer of men and the most dextrous flatterer of princes. He overwhelmed the palaces of the Medici and of the popes, the convents and churches of Italy, with a deluge of mediocrity, commended by rapidity and shameless "bravura" of hand: he alone did more work than all the artists of Tuscany together, and to him may be truly applied, what he had the insolence to say of Tintoretto, that he turned the art into a boy's toy.§

Whilst Michelangelo was doomed to lament the perversion of his style, death prevented Raphael from witnessing the gradual decay of his. The exuberant fertility of Julio Pippi, called Romano ‖, and the less extensive but classic taste of Polidoro da Caravaggio deserted indeed the standard of their master, but with a dignity and magnitude of compass which command respect. It is less from his tutored

* Now the first ornament of the exquisite collection of J. J. Angerstein, Esq. — [Now in the National Gallery. — W.]

† Transferred to canvas by Pietro Palmaroli in 1811, but still preserved in the church of the Trinità de' Monti. — W.

‡ Giorgio Vasari, of Arezzo, died in 1584, aged 68.

§ See note, *ante*. — W.

‖ Julio Pippi, called Romano, died at Mantua in 1546, aged 54. [His family name was Giannuzzi; the name of Pippi he derived from his father, who is called Pietro Pippi, that is, Pietro the son of Philip (Giannuzzi). *Kunstblatt*. [No. 31. 1847. — W.]

works in the Vatican, than from the colossal conceptions, the pathetic or sublime allegories, and the voluptuous reveries which enchant the palace del T, near Mantua, that we must form our estimate of Julio's powers: they were of a size to challenge all competition, had he united purity of taste and delicacy of mind with energy and loftiness of thought; as they are, they resemble a mighty stream, sometimes flowing in a full and limpid vein, but oftener turbid with rubbish. He has left specimens of composition from the most sublime to the most extravagant; to a primeval simplicity of conception in his mythologic subjects, which transports us to the golden age of Hesiod, he joined a rage for the grotesque; to uncommon powers of expression a decided attachment to deformity and grimace, and to the warmest and most genial imagery the most ungenial colour.

With nearly equal, but still more mixed fertility, Francesco Primaticcio* propagated the style and the conceptions of his master Julio on the Gallic side of the Alps, and with the assistance of Nicolo, commonly called Dell' Abate after him†, filled the palaces of Francis I. with mythologic and allegoric works, in frescoes of an energy and depth of tone till then unknown. Theirs was the cyclus of pictures from the Odyssey of Homer at Fontainebleau, a mine of classic and picturesque materials: they are destroyed, and we may estimate their loss, even through the disguise of the mannered and feeble etchings of Theodore Van Tulden.

The compact style of Polidoro‡, formed on the antique, such as it is exhibited in the best series of the Roman military basso-rilievos, is more monumental, than imitative or characteristic. But the virility of his taste, the impassioned motion of his groups, the simplicity, breadth, and never excelled elegance and probability of his drapery, with the forcible chiaroscuro of his compositions, make us regret the narrowness of the walk to which he confined his powers.

* Francesco Primaticcio, made Abbé de St. Martin de Troyes, by Francis I., died in France 1570, aged 80.

† His own name was Abati, of which Dell' Abate appears to be a corruption, though it is that by which he is commonly known: he was born at Modena in 1512, and died at Paris in 1571. See Tiraboschi, *Notizie de Pittori, &c., di Modena.* — W.

‡ Polidoro Caldara da Caravaggio was assassinated at Messina in 1543, aged 51.

No painter ever painted his own mind so forcibly as Michelangelo Amerigi, surnamed Il Caravaggio.* To none nature ever set limits with a more decided hand. Darkness gave him light; into his melancholy cell light stole only with a pale reluctant ray, or broke on it, as flashes on a stormy night. The most vulgar forms he recommended by ideal light and shade, and a tremendous breadth of manner.

The aim and style of the Roman school deserve little further notice here, till the appearance of Nicolas Poussin† a Frenchman, but grafted on the Roman stock. Bred under Quintin Varin, a French painter of mediocrity, he found on his arrival in Italy that he had more to unlearn than to follow of his master's principles, renounced the national character, and not only with the utmost ardour adopted, but suffered himself to be wholly absorbed by the antique. Such was his attachment to the ancients, that it may be said he less imitated their spirit than copied their relics and painted sculpture; the costume, the mythology, the rites of antiquity were his element; his scenery, his landscape, are pure classic ground. He has left specimens to show that he was sometimes sublime, and often in the highest degree pathetic, but history in the strictest sense was his property, and in that he ought to be followed. His agents only appear, to tell the fact; they are subordinate to the story. Sometimes he attempted to tell a story that cannot be told: of his historic dignity the celebrated series of Sacraments‡; of his sublimity, the vision he gave to Coriolanus; of his pathetic power, the infant Pyrrhus; and of the vain attempt to tell by figures what words alone can tell, the testament of Eudamidas, are striking instances. His eye, though impressed with the tint, and breadth, and imitation of Titian, seldom inspired him to charm with colour; crudity and patches frequently deform his effects. He is unequal in his

* Michelangelo Amerigi, surnamed Il Caravaggio, knight of Malta, died 1609, aged 40.

† Nicolas Poussin, of Andely, died at Rome, 1665, aged 71.

‡ Poussin painted this series of seven pictures twice, and both sets are now in England — the first, in the possession of the Duke of Rutland at Belvoir Castle; and the other, in the collection of the Earl of Ellesmere: they are engraved by Pesne. — W.

style of design; sometimes his comprehension fails him; he supplies, like Pietro Testa, ideal heads and torsos with limbs and extremities transcribed from the model. Whether from choice or want of power, he has seldom executed his conceptions on a larger scale than that which bears his name, and which has, perhaps, as much contributed to make him the darling of this country, as his merit.

The wildness of Salvator Rosa* opposes a powerful contrast to the classic regularity of Poussin. Terrific and grand in his conceptions of inanimate nature, he was reduced to attempts of hiding by boldness of hand, his inability of exhibiting her impassioned, or in the dignity of character: his line is vulgar: his magic visions, less founded on principles of terror than on mythologic trash and caprice, are to the probable combinations of nature, what the paroxysms of a fever are to the flights of vigorous fancy. Though so much extolled and so ambitiously imitated, his banditti are a medley made up of starveling models, shreds and bits of armour from his lumber-room, brushed into notice by a daring pencil. Salvator was a satirist and a critic, but the rod which he had the insolence to lift against the nudities of Michelangelo, and the anachronism of Raphael, would have been better employed in chastising his own misconceptions.

The principle of Titian, less pure in itself and less decided in its object of imitation, did not suffer so much from its more or less appropriate application by his successors, as the former two. Colour once in a very high degree attained, disdains subordination and engrosses the whole. Mutual similarity attracts, body tends to body, as mind to mind; and he who has once gained supreme dominion over the eye, will hardly resign it to court the more coy approbation of mind, of a few opposed to nearly all. Add to this the character of the place and the nature of the encouragement held out to the Venetian artists. Venice was the centre of commerce, the repository of the riches of the globe, the splendid toy-shop of the time: its chief inhabitants princely merchants, or a patrician race elevated to rank by accumulations from trade, or naval prowess; the bulk of the people, mecha-

* Salvator Rosa, surnamed Salvatoriello, died at Rome 1673, aged 59. He was born in the neighbourhood of Naples, July 21. 1615. — W.

nics or artisans, administering the means, and in their turn fed by the produce of luxury. Of such a system, what could the art be more than the parasite? Religion itself had exchanged its gravity for the allurements of ear and eye, and even sanctity disgusted, unless arrayed by the gorgeous hand of fashion. — Such was, such will always be the birth-place and the theatre of colour: and hence it is more matter of wonder that the first and greatest colourists should so long have forborne to overstep the modesty of nature in the use of that alluring medium, than that they yielded by degrees to its golden solicitations.*

The principle of Correggio vanished with its author, though it found numerous imitators of its parts. Since him, no eye has conceived that expanse of harmony with which the voluptuous sensibility of his mind arranged and enchanted all visible nature. His grace, so much vaunted and

* Of the portraits in fresco which Raphael scattered over the compositions of the Vatican, we shall find an opportunity to speak. But, in oil, the real style of portrait began at Venice with Giorgione, flourished in Sebastian del Piombo, and was carried to perfection by Titian, who filled the masses of the first without entangling himself in the minute details of the second. Tintoretto, Bassan, and Paolo of Verona, followed the principle of Titian. After these, it migrated from Italy to reside with the Spaniard Diego Velazquez, from whom Rubens and Vandyck [1] attempted to transplant it to Flanders, France, and England, with unequal success. France seized less on the delicacy than on the affectation of Vandyck, and soon turned the art of representing men and women into a mere remembrancer of fashions and airs. England had possessed Holbein, but it was reserved for the German Lely, and his successor Kneller, to lay the foundation of a manner, which, by pretending to unite portrait with history, gave a retrograde direction for near a century to both. A mob of shepherds and shepherdesses, in flowing wigs and dressed curls, ruffled Endymions, humble Junos, withered Hebes, surly Allegros, and smirking Pensierosas, usurped the place of truth, propriety, and character. Even the lamented powers of the greatest painter whom this country, and perhaps our age, produced, long vainly struggled, and scarcely in the eve of life succeeded to emancipate us from this dastard taste.

[1] The idea of Rubens transplanting portraiture into Flanders from a Spanish painter who was but a boy when he was already a great master, is certainly not a happy one. Vandyck and Velazquez were born in the same year — 1599; Rubens was twenty-two years their senior, and on his first visit to Spain in 1605, Velazquez was but a child; his second visit was in 1628. — W

so little understood, was adopted and improved to elegance by Francesco Mazzuoli, called Il Parmigiano*, but instead of making her the measure of propriety, he degraded her to affectation: in Parmigiano's figures action is the adjective of the posture; the accident of attitude; they "make themselves air, into which they vanish." That disengaged play of delicate forms, the "Sueltezza" of the Italians, is the prerogative of Parmigiano, though nearly always obtained at the expense of proportion. His grandeur, as conscious as his grace, sacrifices the motive to the mode, simplicity to contrast: his St. John loses the fervour of the apostle in the orator; his Moses the dignity of the lawgiver in the savage. With incredible force of chiaroscuro, he united bland effects and fascinating hues, but their frequent ruins teach the important lesson, that the mixtures which anticipate the beauties of time, are big with the seeds of premature decay.

Such was the state of the art, when, towards the decline of the sixteenth century, Lodovico Carracci†, with his cousins Agostino‡ and Annibale, founded at Bologna that

* Francesco Mazzuoli, called Il Parmigiano, died at Casal Maggiore in 1540, at the age of 36. The magnificent picture of the St. John we speak of was begun by order of the Lady Maria Bufalina, and destined for the church of San Salvadore del Lauro at Città di Castello. It probably never received the last hand of the master, who fled from Rome, where he painted it, at the sacking of that city, under Charles Bourbon, in 1527; it remained in the refectory of the convent della Pace for several years, was carried to Città di Castello by Messer Giulio Bufalini, and is now in England.[1] The Moses, a figure in fresco at Parma, together with Raphael's figure of God in the vision of Ezekiel, is said, by Mr. Mason, to have furnished Gray with the head and action of his bard: if that was the case, he would have done well to acquaint us with the poet's method of making "Placidis coire immitia."

† Lodovico Carracci died at Bologna in 1619, aged 64.

‡ Agostino Carracci died at Parma in 1602, at the age of 44.[2] His

[1] This "magnificent picture," as Fuseli terms it, is that by Parmigiano in the National Gallery, now known as the St. Jerome. The peculiar shape of this work is owing to the site for which it was painted; but the distortions of the figures probably must be laid to the inexperienced judgment of the young painter when he produced it. It was painted in his twenty-fourth year. — W.

[2] Forty-two: his age and the date of his death are thus written upon his tomb in the cathedral of Parma: OB. V. ID. MART. M.DCII. ÆT. SUÆ. AN. XLIII. See Bellori, *Vite de' Pittori*, and the Editor's *Catalogue of the National Gallery*. — W.

eclectic school, which by selecting the beauties, correcting the faults, supplying the defects and avoiding the extremes of the different styles, attempted to form a perfect system. But as the mechanic part was their only object, they did not perceive that the projected union was incompatible with the leading principle of each master. Let us hear this plan from Agostino Carracci himself, as it is laid down in his sonnet* on the ingredients required to form a perfect painter, if that may be called a sonnet which has more the air of medical prescription. "Take," says Agostino, "the design of Rome, Venetian motion and shade, the dignified tone of Lombardy's colour, the terrible manner of Michelangelo, the just symmetry of Raphael, Titian's truth of nature, and the

is the San Girolamo in the Certosa, near Bologna; his, the Thetis with the Nereids, Cupids, and Tritons in the gallery of the palace Farnese. Why, as an engraver, he should have wasted his powers on the large plate from the Crucifixion, painted by Tintoretto, in the hospitio of the school of San Rocco, — a picture of which he could not express the tone, its greatest merit, is not easily unriddled. Annibale Carracci died at Rome in 1609, at the age of 49.

* SONNET OF AGOSTINO CARRACCI.

Chi farsi un buon Pittor brama, e desia,
Il disegno di Roma abbia alla mano,
La mossa coll' ombrar Veneziano,
E il degno colorir di Lombardia,

Di Michelangiol la terribil via,
Il vero natural di Tiziano,
Del Correggio lo stil puro, e sovrano,
E di un Raffael la giusta simmetria.

Del Tibaldi il decoro, e il fondamento,
Del dotto Primaticcio l'inventare,
E un po di grazia del Parmigianino.

Ma senza tanti studi, e tanto stento,
Si ponga l'opre solo ad imitare,
Che qui lasciocci il nostro Niccolino.

Malvasia, author of the *Felsina Pittrice*, has made this sonnet the text to his drowsy rhapsody on the frescoes of Lodovico Carracci and some of his scholars, in the cloisters of San Michele in Bosco, by Bologna. He circumscribes the "*Mossa Veneziana*," of the sonnet, by "*Quel strepitoso motivo e quel divincolamento*" peculiar to Tintoretto.

sovereign purity of Correggio's style: add to these the decorum and solidity of Tibaldi, the learned invention of Primaticcio, and a little of Parmigiano's grace: but to save so much study, such weary labour, apply your imitation to the works which our dear Nicolo has left us here." Of such advice, balanced between the tone of regular breeding and the cant of an empiric, what could be the result? excellence or mediocrity? who ever imagined that a multitude of dissimilar threads could compose an uniform texture, that dissemination of spots would make masses, or a little of many things produce a legitimate whole? Indiscriminate imitation must end in the extinction of character, and that in mediocrity,—the cipher of art.

And were the Carracci such? Separate the precept from the practice, the artist from the teacher; and the Carracci are in possession of my submissive homage. Lodovico, far from implicitly subscribing to a master's dictates, was the sworn pupil of nature. To a modest style of form, to a simplicity eminently fitted for those subjects of religious gravity which his taste preferred, he joined that solemnity of hue, that sober twilight, the air of cloistered meditation, which you have so often heard recommended as the proper tone of historic colour. Too often content to rear the humbler graces of his subject, he seldom courted elegance, but always when he did with enviable success. Even now, though nearly in a state of evanescence, the three nymphs in the garden scene of San Michele in Bosco, seem moulded by the hand, inspired by the breath of love. Agostino, with a singular modesty which prompted him rather to propagate the fame of others by his graver, than by steady exertion to rely on his own power for perpetuity of name, combined with some learning a cultivated taste, correctness, though not elegance of form, and a Correggiesque colour. Annibale, superior to both in power of execution and academic prowess, was inferior to either in taste, and sensibility and judgment; for the most striking proof of this inferiority, I appeal to his master-work, the work on which he rests his fame,—the gallery of the Farnese palace: a work whose uniform vigour of execution nothing can equal but its imbecility and incongruity of conception. If impropriety of ornament were to be fixed by definition, the sub-

jects of the Farnese gallery might be quoted as the most decisive instances. Criticism has attempted to dismiss Paolo Veronese and Tintoretto from the province of legitimate history with the contemptuous appellation of ornamental painters, not for having painted subjects inapplicable to the public and private palaces, the churches and convents, which they were employed to decorate, but because they treated them sometimes without regard to costume, or the simplicity due to sacred, heroic or allegoric subjects: if this be just, where shall we class him, who, with the Cappella Sistina and the Vatican before his eye, fills the mansion of religious austerity and episcopal dignity with a chaotic series of trite fable and bacchanalian revelry, without allegory, void of allusion, merely to gratify the puerile ostentation of dauntless execution and academic vigour? if the praise given to a work be not always transferable to its master; if, as Milton says, "the work some praise and some the architect," let us admire the splendour, the exuberance, the concentration of powers displayed in the Farnese gallery, whilst we lament their misapplication by Annibale Carracci.

The heterogeneous principle of the eclectic school soon operated its own dissolution: the great talents which the Carracci had tutored, soon found their own bias, and abandoned themselves to their own peculiar taste. B. Schidone died young in 1615. Barto. Schidone, Guido Reni*, Giovanni Lanfranco, Francesco Albani, Domenico Zampieri, and Francesco Barbieri, called Guercino†, differed as much in their objects of imitation as their names. Schidone, all of whose mind was in his eye, embraced, and often to meaner subjects applied the harmony and colour of Correggio, whilst Lanfranco strove, but strove without success, to follow him through the expanse of his creation and

* Guido Reni died in 1642, aged 68. Giov. Lanfranco died at Naples in 1647, aged 66. Franc. Albani died in 1660, aged 82. Domenico Zampieri, called Il Domenichino, died in 1641, aged 60. Franc. Barbieri of Cento, called Il Guercino, from a cast in his eye, died in 1667, aged 76.

† Guercino cannot be reckoned among the pupils of the Carracci: though he may have derived much from their example, he was self-taught, and his principal model was Michelangelo de Caravaggio. — W.

masses. Grace attracted Guido, but it was the studied grace of theatres: his female forms are abstracts of antique beauty, attended by languishing attitudes, arrayed by voluptuous fashions. His male forms, transcripts of models, such as are found in a genial climate, are sometimes highly characteristic of dignified manhood or apostolic fervour, like his Peter and Paul, formerly in the Zampieri at Bologna: sometimes stately, courteous, insipid, like his Paris attending Helen, more with the air of an ambassador, by proxy, than carrying her off with a lover's fervour. His Aurora deserved to precede a more majestic sun, and hours less clumsy*—his colour varies with his style, sometimes bland and harmonious, sometimes vigorous and stern, sometimes flat and insipid. Albani, chiefly attracted by soft mythologic conceits, formed nereids and oreads on plump Venetian models, and contrasted their pearly hues with the rosy tints of loves, the juicy brown of fauns and satyrs, and rich marine or sylvan scenery. Domenichino, more obedient than the rest to his masters, aimed at the beauty of the antique, the expression of Raphael, the vigour of Annibale, the colour of Lodovico, and mixing something of each, fell short of all; whilst Guercino broke like a torrent over all academic rules, and with an ungovernable itch of copying whatever lay in his way, sacrificed mind, form, and costume to effects of colour, fierceness of chiaroscuro, and intrepidity of hand.

Such was the state of art when the spirit of machinery, in submission to the vanities and upstart pride of papal nepotism, destroyed what yet was left of meaning; when equilibration, contrast, grouping engrossed composition, and poured a deluge of gay common-place over the platfonds, panels, and cupolas of palaces and temples. Those who could not conceive a figure singly, scattered multitudes; to count, was to be poor. The rainbow and the seasons were ransacked for their hues, and every eye became the tributary of the great but abused talents of Pietro da Cortona, and the fascinating but debauched and empty facility of Luca Giordano.†

* This is the celebrated fresco on the ceiling of the garden-house of the Rospigliosi palace at Rome: it is well known from the prints after it by Frey and Morghen. — W.

† Pietro Berretini, of Cortona, the painter of the ceiling in the Bar-

The same revolution of mind that had organised the arts of Italy spread, without visible communication, to Germany; and towards the decline of the fifteenth century, the uncouth essays of Martin Schön, Michael Wolgemuth, and Albrecht Altorfer, were succeeded by the finer polish and the more dextrous method of Albert Dürer. The indiscriminate use of the words genius and talent has perhaps nowhere caused more confusion than in the classification of artists. Albert Dürer was in my opinion a man of great ingenuity, without being a genius. He studied, and as far as his penetration reached, established certain proportions of the human frame, but he did not invent a style: every work of his is a proof that he wanted the power of imitation, of concluding from what he saw, to what he did not see, that he copied rather than selected the forms that surrounded him, and sans remorse tacked deformity and meagerness to fulness, and sometimes to beauty.* Such is his design; in

berini hall, and of the gallery in the lesser Pamphili palace, the vernal suavity of whose fresco tints no pencil ever equalled, died at Rome in 1669, aged 73. Luca Giordano, nicknamed Fa-presto, or Dispatch, from the rapidity of his execution, the greatest machinist of his time, died in 1705, aged 76.

* We are informed by the Editor of the Latin translation of Albert Dürer's book, on the symmetry of the parts of the human frame (Parisiis, in officina Caroli Perier in vico Bellovaco, sub Bellerophonte, 1557, fol.), that, during Albert's stay at Venice[1], where he resided for a short time, to procure redress from the Signoria for the forgery of Marc Antonio, he became familiar with Giovanni Bellini; and that Andrea Mantegna, who had heard of his arrival in Italy, and had conceived a high opinion of his execution and fertility, sent him a message of invitation to Mantua, for the express purpose of giving him an idea of that form of which he himself had obtained a glimpse from the contemplation of the antique. Andrea was then ill, and expired before Albert, who immediately prepared to set out for Mantua, could profit by his instructions. This disappointment, says my author, Albert never ceased to lament during his life. How fit the Mantuan was to instruct the German, is not the question here; but Albert's regret seems to prove that he felt a want which his model could not supply; and that he had too just an idea of the importance of the art to be proud of dexterity of finger or facility of execution, when employed on objects essentially defective or comparatively trifling. The following personal account of Albert deserves to be given in the Latin Editor's own words: "E Pannonia oriundum accepimus — Erat caput argutum, oculi micantes, nasus honestus et

[1] This was in 1506, not 1516, as is stated by Lanzi. — W.

composition copious without taste, anxiously precise in parts, and unmindful of the whole, he has rather shown us what to avoid than what to follow. He sometimes had a glimpse of the sublime, but it was only a glimpse: the expanded agony of Christ on the Mount of Olives, and the mystic conception of his figure of Melancholy, are thoughts of sublimity, though the expression of the last is weakened by the rubbish he has thrown about her. His Knight attended by Death and the Fiend, is more capricious than terrible; and his Adam and Eve are two common models shut up in a rocky dungeon. If he approached genius in any part of art, it was in colour. His colour went beyond his age, and as far excelled in truth and breadth and handling the oil colour of Raphael, as Raphael excels him in every other quality. I speak of easel-pictures—his drapery is broad though much too angular, and rather snapped than folded. Albert is called the father of the German school, though he neither reared scholars, nor was imitated by the German artists of his or the succeeding century. That the exportation of his works to Italy should have effected a temporary change in the principles of some Tuscans who had studied Michelangelo—of Andrea del Sarto, and Jacopo da Pontormo, is a fact which proves that minds at certain periods may be subject to epidemic influence as well as bodies.

Lucas of Leyden* was the Dutch imitator of Albert; but the forms of Aldegrever, Sebald Beheim, and George Pentz, appear to have been the result of careful inspection of Marc Antonio's prints from Raphael, of whom Pentz was probably a scholar; and ere long the style of Michelangelo, as adopted by Pelegrino Tibaldi, and spread by the graver of Giorgio Mantuano, provoked those caravans of German, Dutch, and Flemish students, who on their return from Italy, at the courts of Prague and Munich, in Flanders and the Netherlands, introduced that preposterous manner, the

quem Greci Τετράγωνον vocant; proceriusculum collum, pectus amplum, castigatus venter, femora nervosa, crura stabilia; sed digitis nihil dixisses vidisse elegantius." – Albert Dürer was the scholar of Martin Schön and Michael Wolgemuth, and died at Nuremberg in 1528, aged 57.

* Lucas Jacobze (his grandfather's name was Jacob), called Lucas of Leyden, and, by the Italians, Luca d'Ollanda, died at Leyden in 1533, [aged only 39. — W.]

bloated excrescence of diseased brains, which in the form of man left nothing human, distorted action and gesture with insanity of affectation, and dressed the gewgaws of children in colossal shapes; the style of Golzius and Spranger, Heynz and ab Ach: but though content to feed on the husks of Tuscan design, they imbibed the colour of Venice, and spread the elements of that excellence which distinguished the succeeding schools of Flanders and of Holland.

This frantic pilgrimage to Italy ceased at the apparition of the two meteors of art, Peter Paul Rubens*, and Rembrandt Van Rhyn; both of whom, disdaining to acknowledge the usual laws of admission to the temple of fame, boldly forged their own keys, entered and took possession, each of a most conspicuous place, by his own power. Rubens, born at Cologne, in Germany, but brought up at Antwerp, then the depository of western commerce, a school of religious and classic learning, and the pompous seat of Austrian and Spanish superstition, met these advantages with an ardour and success of which ordinary minds can form no idea, if we compare the period at which he is said to have seriously applied himself to painting under the tuition of Otho Van Veen, with the unbounded power he had acquired over the instruments of art when he set out for Italy; where we instantly discover him not as the pupil, but as the successful rival of the masters whose works he had selected for the objects of his emulation. Endowed with a full comprehension of his own character, he wasted not a moment on the acquisition of excellence incompatible with its fervour, but flew to the centre of his ambition, Venice, and soon compounded from the splendour of Paolo Veronese and the glow of Tintoretto, that florid system of mannered magnificence which is the element of his art and the principle of his school. He first spread that ideal pallet, which reduced to its standard the variety of nature, and once methodized, whilst his mind tuned the method, shortened or superseded

* Peter Paul Rubens, of Cologne, the disciple of Adam Van Ort and Otho Venius, died at or near Antwerp in 1641, aged 63. [May 30. 1640, towards the close of his 63rd year.—W.]

See the admirable character given of him by Sir Joshua Reynolds, annexed to his *Journey to Flanders*, vol. ii. of his Works.

individual imitation. His scholars, however dissimilar in themselves, saw with the eye of their master: the eye of Rubens was become the substitute of nature; still the mind alone that had balanced these tints, and weighed their powers, could apply them to their objects, and determine their use in the pompous display of historic and allegoric magnificence; for *that* they were selected, for *that* the gorgeous nosegay swelled: but when in the progress of depraved practice they became the mere palliatives of mental impotence, empty representatives of themselves, the supporters of nothing but clumsy forms and clumsier conceits, they can only be considered as splendid improprieties, as the substitutes for wants which no colour can palliate ano no tint supply.

In this censure I am under no apprehension of being suspected to include either the illustrious name of Vandyck*, or that of Abraham Diepenbeck. Vandyck, more elegant, more refined to graces, which the genius of Rubens disdained to court, joined that exquisite taste which, in following the general principle of his master, moderated and adapted its application to his own pursuits. His sphere was portrait, and the imitation of Titian insured him the second place in that. The fancy of Diepenbeck, though not so exuberant, if I be not mistaken, excelled in sublimity the imagination of Rubens: his Bellerophon, Dioscuri, Hippolytus, Ixion, Sisyphus, fear no competitor among the productions of his master.

Rembrandt† was, in my opinion, a genius of the first class in whatever relates not to form. In spite of the most portentous deformity, and without considering the spell of his chiaroscuro, such were his powers of nature, such the grandeur, pathos, or simplicity of his composition, from the most elevated or extensive arrangement to the meanest and most homely, that the best cultivated eye, the purest sensi-

* Anthony Vandyck died in London, 1641, at the age of 42. — The poetic conception of Abraham Diepenbeck may be estimated from the Temple des Muses of M. de Marolles; re-edited, but not improved, by Bernard Picart.

† Rembrandt died at Amsterdam, in 1674, aged 68. — [Rembrandt was born in 1606, and died at Amsterdam, July 19. 1664. Immerzeel, *Levens en Werken, etc.*; and the *Catalogue of the National Gallery*. Note. — W.]

bility, and the most refined taste dwell on them, equally enthralled. Shakspere alone excepted, no one combined with so much transcendent excellence so many, in all other men unpardonable faults—and reconciled us to them. He possessed the full empire of light and shade, and of all the tints that float between them: he tinged his pencil with equal success in the cool of dawn, in the noon-day ray, in the livid flash, in evanescent twilight, and rendered darkness visible. Though made to bend a steadfast eye on the bolder phenomena of nature, yet he knew how to follow her into her calmest abodes, gave interest to insipidity or baldness, and plucked a flower in every desert. None ever like Rembrandt knew to improve an accident into a beauty, or give importance to a trifle. If ever he had a master, he had no followers; Holland was not made to comprehend his power. The succeeding school of colourists were content to tip the cottage, the hamlet, the boor, the ale-pot, the shambles, and the haze of winter, with orient hues, or the glow of setting summer suns.

In turning our eye to Switzerland we shall find great powers without great names, those of Hans Holbein* and Francis Mola only excepted. But the scrupulous precision, the high finish, and the Titianesque colour of Hans Holbein, make the least part of his excellence for those who have seen his Designs of the Passion, and that series of emblematic groups, known under the name of Holbein's Dance of Death. From Belinzona to Basle, invention appears to have been the characteristic of Helvetic art: the works of Tobias Stimmer, Christopher Murer, Jost Amman, Gotthard Ringgli, are mines of invention, and exhibit a style of design, equally poised between the emaciated dryness of Albert Dürer and the bloated corpulence of Golzius.

The seeds of mediocrity which the Carracci had attempted to scatter over Italy, found a more benign soil, and reared an abundant harvest in France: to mix up a compound from something of every excellence in the catalogue of art, was the principle of their theory and their aim in

* Hans Holbein, of Basle, died in London, 1544, at the age of 46. Peter Francis Mola, the scholar of Giuseppe d'Arpino and Franc. Albani, was born at the village of Coldre, of the diocese of Balerna, in the bailliage of Mendrisio, in 1621, and died at Rome in 1666.

execution. It is in France where Michelangelo's right to the title of a painter was first questioned. The fierceness of his line, as they call it, the purity of the antique, and the characteristic forms of Raphael, are only the road to the academic vigour, the librated style of Annibale Carracci, and from that they appeal to the model; in composition they consult more the artifice of grouping, contrast, and richness, than the subject or propriety; their expression is dictated by the theatre. From the uniformity of this process, not to allow that the school of France offers respectable exceptions, would be unjust; without recurring again to the name of Nicolas Poussin, the works of Eustache le Sueur*, Charles le Brun, Sebastien Bourdon, and sometimes Pierre Mignard, contain original beauties and rich materials. Le Sueur's series of pictures in the Chartreux† exhibit the features of contemplative piety, in a purity of style and a placid breadth of manner that moves the heart. His dignified Martyrdom of St. Laurence, and the Burning of the Magic Books at Ephesus, breathe the spirit of Raphael. The powerful comprehension of a whole, only equalled by the fire which pervades every part of the Battles of Alexander, by Charles le Brun, would entitle him to the highest rank in history, had the characters been less mannered, had he not exchanged the Argyraspids and the Macedonian phalanx for the compact legionaries of the Trajan pillar; had he distinguished Greeks from barbarians, rather by national feature and form than by accoutrement and armour. The Seven Works of Charity by Sebastien Bourdon teem with surprising, pathetic, and always novel images; and in the Plague of David, by Pierre Mignard, our sympathy is roused by energies of terror and combinations of woe, which escaped Poussin and Raphael himself.

The obstinacy of national pride‡, perhaps more than the neglect of government or the frown of superstition, confined

* Eustache le Sueur, bred under Simon Vouet, died at Paris in 1655, at the age of 38. His fellow-scholar and overbearing rival, Charles le Brun, died in 1690, aged 71.

† Now in the Louvre. — W.

‡ For the best account of Spanish art, see *Lettera di A. R. Mengs a Don Antonio Ponz.* Opere di Mengs, vol. ii. Mengs was born at Ausig, in Bohemia, in 1728, and died at Rome in 1779.

the labours of the Spanish school, from its obscure origin at Sevilla to its brightest period, within the narrow limits of individual imitation. But the degree of perfection attained by Diego Velazquez, Joseph Ribera, and Murillo, in pursuing the same object by means as different as successful, impresses us with deep respect for the variety of their powers.

That the great style ever received the homage of Spanish genius, appears not; neither Alfonso Berruguette, nor Pellegrino Tibaldi, left followers: but that the eyes and the taste fed by the substance of Spagnuoletto and Murillo, should without reluctance have submitted to the gay volatility of Luca Giordano, and the ostentatious flimsiness of Sebastian Conca, would be matter of surprise, did we not see the same principles successfully pursued in the platfonds of Antonio Raphael Mengs, the painter of philosophy, as he is styled by his biographer D'Azara. The cartoons of the frescoes painted for the royal palace of Madrid, representing the apotheosis of Trajan and the temple of Renown, exhibit less the style of Raphael in the nuptials of Cupid and Psyche at the Farnesina, than the gorgeous but empty bustle of Pietro da Cortona.

From this view of art on the Continent, let us cast a glance on its state in this country, from the age of Henry VIII. to our own. From that period to this, Britain never ceased pouring its caravans of noble and wealthy pilgrims over Italy, Greece, and Ionia, to pay their devotions at the shrines of virtù and taste. Not content with adoring the obscure idols, they have ransacked their temples, and none returned without some share in the spoil. In plaster or in marble, on canvas or in gems, the arts of Greece and Italy were transported to England; and what Petronius said of Rome, that it was easier to meet there with a god than a man, might be said of London. Without inquiring into the permanent and accidental causes of the inefficacy of these efforts with regard to public taste and support of art, it is observable that, whilst Francis I. was busied, not to aggregate a mass of painted and chiselled treasures merely to gratify his own vanity, and brood over them with sterile avarice, but to scatter the seeds of taste over France, by calling, employing, enriching Andrea del Sarto, Rustici, Rosso, Primaticcio,

Cellini, Niccolo*; in England, Holbein and Torregiano under Henry, and Federigo Zucchero under Elizabeth, were condemned to Gothic work and portrait painting. Charles indeed called Rubens and his scholars to provoke the latent English spark, but the effect was intercepted by his destiny. His son, in possession of the cartoons of Raphael, and with the magnificence of Whitehall before his eyes, suffered Verio to contaminate the walls of his palaces, or degraded Lely to paint the Cymons and Iphigenias of his court; whilst the manner of Kneller swept completely what yet might be left of taste under his successors. Such was the equally contemptible and deplorable state of English art, till the genius of Reynolds first rescued from the mannered depravation of foreigners his own branch, and soon extending his view to the higher departments of art, joined that select body of artists who addressed the ever open ear, ever attentive mind, of our royal founder with the first idea of this establishment. His beneficence soon gave it a place and a name, his august patronage, sanction, and individual encouragement: the annually increased merits of thirty exhibitions in this place, with the collateral ones contrived by the speculations of commerce, have told the surprising effects: a mass of self-taught and tutored powers burst upon the general eye, and unequivocally told the world what might be expected from the concurrence of public encouragement. How far this has been or may be granted or withheld, it is not here my province to surmise: the plans lately adopted, and now organising within these walls, for the dignified propagation and support of art, whether fostered by the great, or left to their own energy, must soon decide what may be produced by the unison of British genius and talent; and whether the painters' school of that nation which claims the foremost honours of modern poetry, which has produced Reynolds, Hogarth, Gainsborough, and Wilson, shall submit to content themselves with a subordinate place among the schools we have enumerated.

* Niccolo dell' Abate. — W.

Lecture III. — Invention.

Introduction. Discrimination of Poetry and Painting. General idea of Invention — its right to select a subject from Nature itself. Visiones — Theon — Agasias. Cartoon of Pisa — Incendio del Borgo. Specific idea of Invention: Epic subjects — Michelangelo. Dramatic subjects — Raphael. Historic subjects — Poussin, &c. Invention has a right to adopt ideas — examples. Duplicity of subject and moment inadmissible. Transfiguration of Raphael.

The brilliant antithesis ascribed to Simonides, that "painting is mute poesy, and poetry speaking painting," made, I apprehend, no part of the technic systems of antiquity. For this we may depend on the general practice of its artists, and still more safely on the philosophic discrimination of Plutarch*, who tells us, that as poetry and painting resemble each other in their uniform address to the senses, for the impression they mean to make on our fancy, and by that on our mind, so they differ as essentially in their *materials* and their *modes* of application, which are regulated by the diversity of the organs they address — ear and eye. *Successive action* communicated by sounds, and *time*, are the medium of poetry; *form* displayed in *space*, and momentaneous energy, are the element of painting.

As, if these premises be true, the distinct representation of continued action is refused to an art which cannot express even in a series of subjects, but by a supposed mental effort in the spectator's mind, the regular succession of their moments, it becomes evident, that instead of attempting to impress us by the indiscriminate usurpation of a principle out of its reach, it ought chiefly to rely for its effect on its great characteristics, space and form, singly or in apposition. In forms alone the idea of existence can be rendered permanent. Sounds die, words perish or become obsolete and obscure, even colours fade, forms alone can neither be extinguished nor misconstrued; by application to their standard alone, description becomes intelligible and distinct. Thus,

* Ὑλῃ και τροποις μιμησεως διαφερουσι.
Πλουταρχ. Π. Αθ. κατα Π. ἡ καθ' ἑ. ἐνδ.

See Lessing's *Laokoon*. Berlin, 1766. 8vo.

the effectual idea of corporeal beauty can strictly exist only in the plastic arts; for as the notion of beauty arises from the pleasure we feel in the harmonious co-operation of the various parts of some favourite object to one end at once, it implies their immediate co-existence in the mass they compose; and, therefore, can be distinctly perceived and conveyed to the mind by the eye alone; hence the representation of form in figure is the *physical* element of the art.

But as bodies exist in time as well as in space; as the pleasure arising from the mere symmetry of an object is as transient as it is immediate; as harmony of parts, if the body be the agent of an internal power, depends for its proof on their application, it follows, that the exclusive exhibition of inert and unemployed form, would be a mistake of the medium for the end, and that character or action is required to make it an interesting object of imitation. And this is the *moral* element of the art.

Those important moments, then, which exhibit the united exertion of form and character in a single object, or in participation with collateral beings, *at once*, and which, with equal rapidity and pregnancy, give us a glimpse of the past, and lead our eye to what follows, furnish the true materials of those technic powers, that select, direct, and fix the objects of imitation to their centre.

The most eminent of these, by the explicit acknowledgment of all ages, and the silent testimony of every breast, is *invention*. He whose eye athwart the outward crust of the rock penetrates into the composition of its materials, and discovers a gold mine, is surely superior to him who afterwards adapts the metal for use Colombo, when he from astronomic and physical inductions concluded to the existence of land in the opposite hemisphere, was surely superior to Amerigo Vespucci, who took possession of its continent; and when Newton, improving accident by meditation, discovered and established the laws of attraction, the projectile and centrifuge qualities of the system, he gave the clue to all who after him applied it to the various branches of philosophy, and was, in fact, the author of all the benefits accruing from their application to society. Homer, when he means to give the principal feature of man, calls him inventor (ἀλφηστής).

From what we have said it is clear that the term *invention*

never ought to be so far misconstrued as to be confounded with that of *creation*, incompatible with our notions of limited being, an idea of pure astonishment, and admissible only when we mention Omnipotence. To *invent* is to find; to find something, presupposes its existence somewhere, implicitly or explicitly, scattered or in a mass; nor should I have presumed to say so much on a word of a meaning so plain, had it not been, and were it not daily confounded, and by fashionable authorities too, with the term creation.

Form, in its widest meaning, the visible universe that envelopes our senses, and its counterpart the invisible one that agitates our mind with visions bred on sense by fancy, are the element and the realm of invention. It discovers, selects, combines the *possible*, the *probable*, the *known*, in a mode that strikes with an air of truth and novelty at once. Possible, strictly means an effect derived from a cause, a body composed of materials, a coalition of forms, whose union or co-agency imply in themselves no absurdity, no contradiction. Applied to our art, it takes a wider latitude; it means the representation of effects derived from causes or forms compounded from materials heterogeneous and incompatible among themselves, but rendered so plausible to our senses, that the transition of one part to another seems to be accounted for by an air of organisation, and the eye glides imperceptibly, or with satisfaction, from one to the other and over the whole. That this was the condition on which, and the limits within which alone the ancients permitted invention to represent what was, strictly speaking, impossible, we may with plausibility surmise from the picture of Zeuxis, described by Lucian in the memoir to which he has prefixed that painter's name, who was probably one of the first adventurers in this species of imagery. Zeuxis had painted a family of centaurs; the dam, a beautiful female to the middle, with the lower parts gradually sliding into the most exquisite forms of a young Thessalian mare, half reclined in playful repose, and gently pawing the velvet ground, offered her human nipple to one infant centaur, whilst another greedily sucked the ferine udder below, but both with their eyes turned up to a lion-whelp held over them by the male centaur their father, rising above the hillock on which the

female reclined, a grim feature, but whose ferocity was somewhat tempered by a smile.

The scenery, the colour, the chiaroscuro, the finish of the whole, was no doubt equal to the style and the conception. This picture the artist exhibited, expecting that justice from the penetration of the public which the genius deserved that taught him to give plausibility to a compound of heterogeneous forms, to inspire them with suitable soul, and to imitate the laws of existence: he was mistaken. The novelty of the conceit eclipsed the art that had embodied it, the artist was absorbed in his subject, and the unbounded praise bestowed, was that of idle, restless curiosity gratified. Sick of gods and goddesses, of demigods and pure human combinations, the Athenians panted only for what was new. The artist, as haughty as irritable, ordered his picture to be withdrawn. "Cover it, Micchio," said he to his attendant; "cover it, and carry it home; for this mob stick only to the clay of our art." Such were the limits set to invention by the ancients; secure within these, it defied the ridicule thrown on that grotesque conglutination which Horace exposes; guarded by these, their mythology scattered its metamorphoses, made every element its tributary, and transmitted the privilege to us, on equal conditions. Their Scylla and the Portress of Hell, their dæmons and our spectres, the shade of Patroclus and the ghost of Hamlet, their naiads, nymphs, and oreads, and our sylphs, gnomes, and fairies, their furies and our witches, differ less in essence than in local, temporary, social modifications. Their common origin was fancy, operating on the materials of nature, assisted by legendary tradition and the curiosity implanted in us of diving into the invisible *; and they are suffered or invited to mix with or superintend real agency, in proportion of the analogy which we discover between them and ourselves. Pindar praises Homer less for that "winged power" which whirls incident on incident with such rapidity that, absorbed by the whole, and drawn from the impossibility of single parts, we swallow a tale too gross to be believed in a dream, than for the greater

* All minute detail tends to destroy terror, as all minute ornament, grandeur. The catalogue of the cauldron's ingredients in Macbeth destroys the terror attendant on the mysterious darkness of preternatural agency; and the seraglio trappings of Rubens annihilate his heroes.

power by which he contrived to connect his imaginary creation with the realities of nature and human passions.* Without this, the fiction of the poet and the painter will leave us stupified rather by its insolence, than impressed by its power; it will be considered only as a superior kind of legerdemain, an exertion of ingenuity to no adequate end.

Before we proceed to the process and the methods of invention, it is not superfluous to advert to a question which has often been made, and by some has been answered in the negative, — *whether it be within the artist's province or not, to find or to combine a subject from himself, without having recourse to tradition or the stores of history and poetry?* Why not, if the subject be within the limits of art and the combinations of nature; though it should have escaped observation? Shall the immediate avenues of the mind, open to all its observers, from the poet to the novelist, be shut only to the artist? Shall he be reduced to receive as alms from them what he has a right to share as common property? Assertions like these say, in other words, that the Laocoon owes the impression he makes on us to his name alone, and that, if tradition had not told a story, and Pliny fixed it to that work, the artist's conception of a father with his sons, surprised and entangled by two serpents within the recesses of a cavern or lonesome dell, was inadmissible, and transgressed the laws of invention. I am much mistaken if, so far from losing its power over us with its traditional sanction, it would not rouse our sympathy more forcibly, and press the subject closer to our breast, were it considered only as the representation of an incident common to humanity. The ancients were so convinced of their right to this disputed prerogative, that they assigned it its own class, and Theon the Samian is mentioned by Quintilian, whom none will accuse or suspect of confounding the limits of the arts, in his list of primary painters, as owing his celebrity to that

* Ἐγω δε πλεον ἐλπομαι
Λογον Ὀδυσσεος, ἡ παθεν,
Δια τον ἀδυεπη γενεσθ' Ὁμερον
Ἐπει ψευδεεσσιν οἱ ποταν᾽ γε μαχανα
Σεμνον ἐπεστι τι. σοφια δε
Κλεπτει παραγοισα μυθοις.

Πινδαρ. Νεμ. Ζ.

intuition into the sudden movements of nature which the Greeks called *φαντασιας*, the Roman *visiones*, and we might circumscribe, by the phrase of "unpremeditated conceptions," the reproduction of associated ideas. He explains what he understood by it in the following passage, adapted to his own profession, rhetoric.* "We give," says he, "the name of visions to what the Greeks call phantasies; that power by which the images of absent things are represented by the mind with the energy of objects moving before our eyes. He who conceives these rightly, will be a master of passions; his is that well-tempered fancy which can imagine things, voices, acts, as they really exist, a power perhaps in a great measure dependent on our will. For if these images so pursue us when our minds are in a state of rest, or fondly fed by hope, or in a kind of waking dream, that we seem to travel, to sail, to fight, to harangue in public, or to dispose of riches we possess not, and all this with an air of reality, why should we not turn to use this vice of the mind? Suppose I am to plead the case of a murdered man, why should not every supposable circumstance of the act float before my eyes? Shall I not see the murderer unawares rush in upon

* M. F. Quintilianus, l. xii. 10. — Concipiendis visionibus (quas ΦΑΝΤΑΣΙΑΣ vocant) Theon Samius — est præstantissimus.

At quomodo fiet ut afficiamur? neque enim sunt motus in nostra potestate. Tentabo etiam de hoc dicere. Quas *φαντασιας* Græci vocant, nos sanè visiones appellamus; per quas imagines rerum absentium ita repræsentantur animo, ut eas cernere oculis ac præsentes habere videamur: has quisquis bene conceperit, is erit in affectibus potentissimus Hunc quidam dicunt *εὐφαντασιωτον*, qui sibi res, voces, actus, secundum verum optume finget; quod quidem nobis volentibus facile continget.

Nam ut inter otia animorum et spes inanes, et velut somnia quædam vigilantium, ita nos hæ de quibus loquimur, imagines persequuntur, ut peregrinari, navigare, præliari, populos alloqui, divitiarum quas non habemus, usum videamur disponere; nec cogitare, sed facere: hoc animi vitium ad utilitatem non transferemus? ut hominem occisum querar, non omnia quæ in re præsenti accidisse credibile est, in oculis habebo? non percussor ille subitus erumpet? non expavescet circumventus? exclamabit, vel rogabit, vel fugiet? non ferientem, non concidentem videbo? non animo sanguis, et pallor et gemitus, extremus denique expirantis hiatus insidebit? (*Idem*, l. vi. c. 11.)

Theon, numbered with the "Proceres" by Quintilian, by Pliny with less discrimination is placed among the "Primis Proximos;" and in some passage of Plutarch, unaccountably censured for impropriety of subject, *ατοπια*, in representing the madness of Orestes.

him? In vain he tries to escape; see how pale he turns; hear you not his shrieks, his intreaties? Do you not see him flying, struck, falling? Will not his blood, his ashy semblance, his groans, his last expiring gasp, seize on my mind?"

Permit me to apply this organ of the orator for one moment to the poet's process: by this radiant recollection of associated ideas, the spontaneous ebullitions of nature, selected by observation, treasured by memory, classed by sensibility and judgment, Shakspere became the supreme master of passions and the ruler of our hearts: this embodied his Falstaff and his Shylock, Hamlet and Lear, Juliet and Rosalind. By this power he saw Warwick uncover the corpse of Gloster, and swear to his assassination and his tugs for life; by this he made Banquo see the weird sisters bubble up from the earth, and in their own air vanish; this is the hand that struck upon the bell when Macbeth's drink was ready, and from her chamber pushed his dreaming wife, once more to methodize the murder of her guest.

And this was the power of Theon*; such was the unpremeditated conception that inspired him with the idea of that warrior, who in the words of Ælian seemed to embody the terrible graces and the enthusiastic furor of the god of war. Impetuous he rushed onward to oppose the sudden incursion of enemies; with shield thrown forward, and high brandished falchion, his step as he swept on seemed to devour the ground: his eye flashed defiance; you fancied to hear his voice; his look denounced perdition and slaughter without mercy. This figure, simple and without other accompaniments of war than what the havock of the distance showed†, Theon deemed sufficient to answer the impression he intended to make on those whom he had selected to inspect it. He kept it covered, till a trumpet, prepared for the purpose, after a prelude of martial symphonies, at once, by his command, blew with invigorated fierceness a signal of attack — the curtain

* Αιλιανου ποικ. ἱστορ. l. ii. c. 44. *Θεωνος του Ζωγραφου πολλα μεν και ἀλλα ὁμολογει την χειρουργιαν ἀγαθην οὐσαν, ἀ ταρ ὐν και τοδε το γραμμα.* —— *Και εἰπες ἀν αὐτον ἐνθουσιᾶν, ὡσπερ εξ 'Αρεος μανεντα.* — *Και σφατ-τειν βλεπων, και ἀπειλῶν δι' ὁλου του σχηματος, ὁτι μηδενος φεισεται.*

† Ælian expressly states that Theon painted *nothing whatever* besides this figure. —W.

dropped, the terrific figure appeared to start from the canvas, and irresistibly assailed the astonished eyes of the assembly.

To prove the relation of Ælian no hyperbolic legend, I need not insist on the magic effect which the union of two sister powers must produce on the senses: of what our art alone and unassisted may perform, the most unequivocal proof exists within these walls; your eyes, your feelings, and your fancy have long anticipated it: whose mind has not now recalled that wonder of a figure, the misnamed gladiator of Agasias,—a figure, whose tremendous energy embodies every element of motion, whilst its pathetic dignity of character enforces sympathies, which the undisguised ferocity of Theon's warrior in vain solicits. But the same irradiation which showed the soldier to Theon showed to Agasias the leader: Theon saw the passion, Agasias * its rule.

* The name of Agasias, the scholar or son of Dositheos, the Ephesian, occurs not in ancient record; and whether he be the Egesias of Quintilian or of Pliny, or these the same, cannot be ascertained; though the style of sculpture and the form of the letters in the inscription are not much at variance with the character which the former gives to the age and style of Calon and Egesias; "Signa — duriora et Tuscanicis proxima." The impropriety of calling this figure a gladiator has been shown by Winkelmann, and on his remark, that it probably exhibits the attitude of a soldier, who signalised himself in some moment of danger, Lessing has founded a conjecture, that it is the figure of Chabrias, from the following passage of Corn. Nepos: "Elucet maxime inventum ejus in prœlio, quod apud Thebas fecit, cùm Boetiis subsidio venisset. Namque in eo victoriæ fidente summo duce Agesilao, fugatis jam ab eo conductitiis catervis, reliquam phalangem loco vetuit cedere; obnixoque genu scuto, projectaque hasta, impetum excipere hostium docuit. Id novum Agesilaus intuens, progredi non est ausus, suosque jam incurrentes tubâ revocavit. Hoc usque eo in Græcia famâ celebratum est, ut illo statu Chabrias sibi statuam fieri voluerit, quæ publicè ei ab Atheniensibus in foro constituta est. Ex quo factum est, ut postea athletæ, *cæterique artifices* his statibus in statuis ponendis uterentur, in quibus victoriam essent adepti?"

On this passage, simple and unperplexed, if we except the words "cæterique artifices," where something is evidently dropped or changed[1],

[1] The passage is simply this — that, from the example of this statue of Chabrias, athletes, and all other artists (that is, from the artist of the statue of Chabrias), chose those attitudes, for their statues, in which they had gained their victories. — W.

But the most striking instance of the eminent place due to this intuitive faculty among the principal organs of invention, is that celebrated performance, which by the united testimony of contemporary writers, and the evident traces of its imitation, scattered over the works of contemporary artists, contributed alone more to the restoration of art and the revolution of style than the united effort of the two centuries

there can, I trust, be but one opinion — that the manœuvre of Chabrias was defensive, and consisted in giving the phalanx a stationary, and at the same time impenetrable posture, to check the progress of the enemy; a repulse, not a victory was obtained; the Thebans were content to maintain their ground, and not a word is said by the historian, of a pursuit, when Agesilaus, startled at the contrivance, called off his troops; but the warrior of Agasias rushes forward in an assailing attitude, whilst with his head and shield turned upwards he seems to guard himself from some attack above him. Lessing, aware of this, to make the passage square with his conjecture, is reduced to a change of punctuation, and accordingly transposes the decisive comma after "scuto," to "genu," and reads "obnixo genu, scuto projectâque hastâ, — docuit." This alone might warrant us to dismiss his conjecture as less solid than daring and acute.

The statue erected to Chabrias in the Athenian forum was probably of brass, for "statua" and "statuarius," in Pliny at least, will, I believe, always be found relative to figures and artists in metal; such were those which at an early period the Athenians dedicated to Harmodius and Aristogiton; from them the custom spread in every direction, and iconic figures in metal began, says Pliny, to be the ornaments of every municipal forum.

From another passage in Nepos, I was once willing to find in our figure an Alcibiades in Phrygia, rushing from the flames of the cottage fired to destroy him, and guarding himself against the javelins and arrows which the gang of Sysamithres and Bagoas showered on him at a distance. "Ille," says the historian, "sonitu flammæ excitatus, quod gladius ei erat subductus, familiaris sui subalare telum eripuit — et — flammæ vim transit. Quem, ut Barbari incendium effugisse viderunt, telis eminus missis, interfecerunt. Sic Alcibiades annos circiter quadraginta natus, diem obiit supremum."

Such is the age of our figure, and it is to be noticed that the right arm and hand, now armed with a lance, are modern; if it be objected, that the figure is iconic, and that the head of Alcibiades, cut off after his death, was carried to Pharnabazus, and his body burned by his mistress, it might be observed in reply, that busts and figures of Alcibiades must have been frequent in Greece, and that the expression found its source in the mind of Agasias. On this conjecture, however, I shall not insist: let us only observe that the character, forms, and attitude might be turned to better use than what Poussin made of it. It might form an admirable Ulysses bestriding the deck of his ship to defend his companions from

that preceded it: I mean the astonishing design commonly called the Cartoon of Pisa, the work of Michelangelo Buonarroti, begun in competition with Leonardo da Vinci, and at intervals finished at Florence. This work, whose celebrity subjected those who had not seen it to the supercilious contempt of the luckier ones who had, which was the common centre of attraction to all the students of Tuscany and Romagna, from Raphael Sanzio to Bastiano da San Gallo, called Aristotile, from his loquacious descants on its beauties; this inestimable work itself is lost, and its destruction is with too much appearance of truth fixed on the mean villany of Baccio Bandinelli, who, in possession of the key to the apartment where it was kept, during the revolutionary troubles of the Florentine republic, after making what use he thought proper of it, is said to have torn it in pieces. Still we may form an idea of its principal groups from some ancient prints and drawings; and of its composition from a small copy now existing at Holkham, the outlines of which have been lately etched. Crude, disguised, or feeble, as these specimens are, they will prove better guides than the half-informed rhapsodies of Vasari, the meagre account of Ascanio Condivi, better than the mere anatomic verdict of Benvenuto Cellini, who denies that the powers afterwards exerted in the Cappella Sistina arrive at "half its excellence."*

the descending fangs of Scylla, or rather, with indignation and anguish, seeing them already snatched up and writhing in the mysterious gripe:

Αυταρ εγω καταδυς κλυτα τευχεα, και δυο δουρε
Μακρ' εν χερσιν ελων, εις ικρια νηος εβαινον
Πρωρης· ——— εκαμον δε μοι ὀσσε
Παντη παπταινοντι προς ηεροειδεα πετρην,
Σκεψαμενος δε ———
Ηδη των ενοησα ποδας και χειρας ὑπερθεν
Ὑψοσ' ἀειρομενων. Odyss. M. 228. seq.

* Sebbene il divino Michelagnolo fece la gran Cappella di Papa Julio, dappoi non arrivò a questo segno mai alla metà, la sua virtù non aggiunse mai alla forza di quei primi studi. Vita di Benvenuto Cellini, p. 13. — Vasari, as appears from his own account, never himself saw the cartoon: he talks of an "infinity of combatants on horseback,"[1] of

[1] The following are his own words: "Si vedeva dalle divine mani di Michelagnolo chi affrettare lo armarsi per dare ajuto a'compagni, altri

It represents an imaginary moment relative to the war carried on by the Florentines against Pisa; and exhibits a numerous group of warriors, roused from their bathing in the Arno, by the sudden signal of a trumpet, and rushing to arms. This composition may without exaggeration be said to personify with unexampled variety that motion which Agasias and Theon embodied in single figures: in imagining this transient moment from a state of relaxation to a state of energy, the ideas of motion, to use the bold figure of Dante, seem to have showered into the artist's mind. From the chief, nearly placed in the centre, who precedes, and whose voice accompanies the trumpet, every age of human agility, every attitude, every feature of alarm, haste, hurry, exertion, eagerness, burst into so many rays, like sparks flying from the hammer. Many have reached, some boldly step, some have leaped on the rocky shore; here two arms emerging from the water grapple with the rock, there two hands cry for help, and their companions bend over or rush on to assist them; often imitated, but inimitable, is the ardent feature of the grim veteran whose every sinew labours to force over the dripping limbs his clothes, whilst gnashing he pushes the foot through the rending garment. He is contrasted by the slender elegance of a half-averted youth, who, though eagerly buckling the armour to his thigh, methodises haste; another swings the high-raised hauberk on his shoul-

which there neither remains nor ever can have existed a trace, if the picture at Holkham be the work of Bastiano da San Gallo. This he saw, for it was painted, at his own desire, by that master, from his small cartoon in 1542, and, by means of Monsignor Jovio, transmitted to Francis I., who highly esteemed it; from his collection it however disappeared, and no mention is made of it by the French writers for near two centuries. It was probably discovered at Paris, bought and carried to England by the late Lord Leicester. That Vasari, on inspecting the copy, should not have corrected the confused account he gives of the cartoon from hearsay, can be wondered at only by those who are unacquainted with his character as a writer. One solitary horse and a drummer on the imaginary background of the groups engraved by Agostino Venetiano, are all the cavalry remaining of Vasari's squadrons, and can as little belong to Michelangelo as the spot on which they are placed.

affibbiarsi la corazza, e molti metter altre armi indosso, ed infiniti combattendo a cavallo cominciare la zuffa." — Vasari, *Vita di Michelagnolo*, p. 183, ed. Bottari.

der, whilst one who seems a leader, mindless of dress, ready for combat, and with brandished spear, overturns a third, who crouched to grasp a weapon — one naked himself, buckles on the mail of his companion, and he, turned toward the enemy, seems to stamp impatiently the ground. Experience and rage, old vigour, young velocity, expanded or contracted, vie in exertions of energy. Yet in this scene of tumult one motive animates the whole, eagerness to engage with subordination to command; this preserves the dignity of action, and from a straggling rabble changes the figures to men whose legitimate contest interests our wishes.

This intuition into the pure emanations of nature, Raphael Sanzio possessed in the most enviable degree, from the utmost conflict of passions to the enchanting round of gentler emotion, and the nearly silent hints of mind and character. To this he devoted the tremendous scenery of that magnificent fresco, known to you all under the name of the *Incendio del Borgo*, in which he sacrificed the historic and mystic part of his subject to the effusion of the various passions roused by the sudden terrors of nocturnal conflagration. It is not for the faint appearance of the miracle which approaches with the pontiff and his train in the back-ground, that Raphael invites our eyes; the perturbation, necessity, hope, fear, danger, the pangs and efforts of affection grappling with the enraged elements of wind and fire, displayed on the foreground, furnish the pathetic motives that press on our hearts. That mother, who but half awake, or rather in a waking trance, drives her children instinctively before her; that prostrate female half covered by her streaming hair, with elevated arms imploring Heaven; that other who over the flaming tenement, heedless of her own danger, absorbed in maternal agony, boldly reaches over to drop the babe into the outstretched arms of its father; that common son of nature, who, careless of another's woe, intent only on his own safety, liberates a leap from the burning wall; the vigorous youth who, followed by an aged mother, bears the palsied father on his shoulder from the rushing wreck; the nimble grace of those helpless females that vainly strive to administer relief — these are the real objects of the painter's aim, and leave the pontiff and the miracle, with taper, bell, and clergy, unheeded in the distance.

I shall not at present expatiate, in tracing from this source, the novel combinations of affection by which Raphael contrived to interest us in his numerous repetitions of Madonnas and Holy Families, selected from the warmest effusions of domestic endearment, or, in Milton's phrase, from "all the charities of father, son, and mother." Nor shall I follow it in its more contaminated descent, to those representations of local manners and national modifications of society, whose characteristic discrimination and humorous exuberance, for instance, we admire in Hogarth, but which, like the fleeting passions of the day, every hour contributes something to obliterate, which soon become unintelligible by time, or degenerate into caricature, the chronicle of scandal, the history-book of the vulgar.*

Invention in its more specific sense receives its subjects from poetry or authenticated tradition; they are *epic* or sublime, *dramatic* or impassioned, *historic* or circumscribed by truth. The first *astonishes;* the second *moves;* the third *informs.*

The aim of the epic† painter is to impress one general idea, one great quality of nature or mode of society, some great maxim, without descending to those subdivisions which the detail of character prescribes; he paints the elements with their own simplicity, height, depth, the vast, the grand, darkness, light, life, death, the past, the future; man, pity, love, joy, fear, terror, peace, war, religion, government: and the visible agents are only engines to force *one* irresistible idea upon the mind and fancy, as the machinery of Archi-

* This is certainly a mistaken estimate both of the value and of the character of Hogarth's works. — W.

† This is rather the *ethic.* The expression *epic* (ἔπος, a word, a narrative) is here vague; an *epic* is a *narrative* of an event, real or imaginary, without any implied scheme: all the middle age metrical romances are epics. It is, generally speaking, the peculiarly objective nature of the epic which distinguishes it from the lyric and other species of poetry. The heroic and romantic epics are the most characteristic productions of this class. So far from any ulterior scheme constituting the *epic,* detail of incident appears to be its very nature, though an important moral may be attached to the narrative. The Marriage à la Mode, the Rake's Progress, and other of Hogarth's series, are true epics, not on account of the moral conveyed, but by virtue of their particular treatment of incident. — W.

medes served only to convey *destruction*, and the wheels of a watch serve only to tell *time*.

Such is the first and general sense of what is called the *sublime*, epic, allegoric, lyric substance. Homer, to impress one forcible idea of *war*, its origin, its progress, and its end, set to work innumerable engines of various magnitude, yet none but what uniformly tends to enforce this and only this idea; gods and demigods are only actors, and nature but the scene of war; no character is discriminated but where discrimination discovers a new look of war; no passion is raised but what is blown up by the breath of war, and as soon absorbed in its universal blaze. As in a conflagration we see turrets, spires, and temples illuminated only to propagate the horrors of destruction, so through the stormy page of Homer we see his heroines and heroes but by the light that blasts them.

This is the principle of that divine series of frescoes with which under the pontificates of Julius II. and Paul III. Michelangelo adorned the lofty compartments of the *Cappella Sistina*, and from a modesty or a pride for ever to be lamented, only not occupied the *whole* of its ample sides.* Its subject is *theocracy* or the empire of religion, considered as the parent and queen of man; the origin, the progress, and final dispensation of Providence, as taught by the sacred records. Amid this imagery of primeval simplicity, whose sole object is the relation of the race to its founder, to look for minute discrimination of character, is to invert the principle of the artist's invention: here is only God with man. The veil of eternity is rent; time, space, and matter teem in the creation of the elements and of earth; life issues from God and adoration from man, in the creation of Adam and

* Michelangelo, even if he had had the leisure, does not appear to have had the opportunity of painting the whole of the chapel. It was with difficulty that he obtained time to paint the Last Judgment, owing to the unfinished state of the monument of Julius II. The opposite wall to the Last Judgment, on which he was, it appears, to represent the Fall of Lucifer, he never found an opportunity to commence, although, according to Vasari, he had prepared his designs. Leo X., who enjoys so great a reputation for virtù, appreciated so little the abilities of Michelangelo, that, during the whole of his pontificate, that great painter was employed on the unworthy occupation of selecting marble from the quarries of Pietra Santa. — W.

his mate; transgression of the precept at the tree of knowledge proves the origin of evil, and of expulsion from the immediate intercourse with God; the œconomy of justice and grace commences in the revolutions of the Deluge, and the covenant made with Noah; and the germs of social character are traced in the subsequent scene between him and his sons; the awful synod of prophets and sibyls are the heralds of the Redeemer, and the host of patriarchs the pedigree of the Son of Man; the brazen serpent and the fall of Haman, the giant subdued by the stripling in Goliath and David, and the conqueror destroyed by female weakness in Judith, are types of his mysterious progress, till Jonah pronounces him immortal; and the magnificence of the Last Judgment, by showing the Saviour in the judge of man, sums up the whole, and reunites the founder and the race.

Such is the spirit of the Sistine Chapel, and the outline of its *general* invention with regard to the cycle of its subjects, as in their choice they lead to each other without intermediate chasms in the transition; as each preceding one prepares and directs the conduct of the next, this the following; and as the intrinsic variety of all conspires to the simplicity of one great end. The *specific* invention of the pictures separate, as each constitutes an independent whole, deserves our consideration next. Each has its centre, from which it disseminates, to which it leads back all secondary points. arranged, hid, or displayed, as they are more or less organs of the inspiring plan. Each rigorously is circumscribed by its generic character; no inferior, merely conventional, temporary, local, or disparate beauty, however in itself alluring, is admitted. Each finally turns upon that transient moment, the moment of suspense, big with the past, and pregnant with the future; the action nowhere expires, for action and interest terminate together. Thus, in the Creation of Adam, the Creator, borne on a group of attendant spirits, the personified powers of Omnipotence, moves on toward his last, best work, the lord of his creation. The immortal spark, issuing from his extended arm, electrifies the new-formed being, who, tremblingly alive, half raised, half reclined, hastens to meet his Maker. In the formation of Eve, the astonishment of life, just organised, is absorbed in the sublimer sentiment of adoration, perfect, though not all disen-

gaged from the side of her dreaming mate, she moves with folded hands and humble dignity towards the majestic Form whose half-raised hand attracts her. What words can express the equally bland and irresistible velocity of that mysterious Being who forms the sun and moon, and, already past, leaves the earth, completely formed, behind him? Here apposition is the symbol of immensity.*

From these specimens of invention, exerted in the more numerous compositions of this *sublime* cycle, let me fix your attention for a few moments on the powers it displays in the single figures of the prophets, those organs of embodied sentiment. Their expression and attitude, whilst it exhibits the unequivocal marks of inspired contemplation in all, and with equal variety, energy, and delicacy, stamps character on each, exhibits in the occupation of the present moment the traces of the past and hints of the future. Esaiah, the image of *inspiration*, sublime and lofty, with an attitude expressive of the sacred trance in which meditation on the Messiah had immersed him, starts at the voice of an attendant genius, who seems to pronounce the words, "to us a child is born, to us a son is given." Daniel, the humbler image of eager *diligence*, transcribes from a volume held by a stripling, with a gesture natural to those who, absorbed in the progress of their subject, are heedless of convenience. His posture shows that he had inspected the volume from which now he is turned, and shall return to it immediately. Zachariah personifies *consideration*, — he has read, and ponders on what he reads. *Inquiry* moves in the dignified activity of Joel, hastening to open a sacred scroll, and to compare the scriptures with each other. Ezechiel, the fervid feature of *fancy*, the seer of resurrection, represented as on the field strewn with bones of the dead, points downward and asks, "can these bones live?" The attendant angel, borne on the wind that agitates his locks and the prophet's vestments, with raised arm and finger pronounces, they shall rise. Last, Jeremiah, subdued by *grief*, and exhausted by lamentation, sinks in silent woe over the ruins of Jerusalem. Nor are the sibyls, those female oracles, less expres-

* Ὁ δε' πως μεγεθυνει τα Δαιμονια; ——— Την Ορμην αὐτων κοσμικῳ διαστηματι καταμετρει

Longinus, § 9.

sive, less individually marked. They are the echo, the counterpart of the prophets. Vigilance, Meditation, Instruction, Divination, are personified. If the artist who, absorbed by the uniform power and magnitude of execution, saw only breadth and nature in their figures, must be told that he has discovered the least part of their excellence, the critic who charges them with affectation can only be dismissed with our contempt.

On the immense plain of the Last Judgment, Michelangelo has wound up the destiny of man, simply considered as the subject of religion, faithful or rebellious; and in one generic manner has distributed happiness and misery: the general feature of passions is given, and no more. But had Raphael meditated that subject, he would undoubtedly have applied to our sympathies for his choice of imagery; he would have combined all possible emotions with the utmost variety of probable or real character. A father meeting his son, a mother torn from her daughter, lovers flying into each other's arms, friends for ever separated, children accusing their parents, enemies reconciled, tyrants dragged before the tribunal by their subjects, conquerors hiding themselves from their victims of carnage, innocence declared, hypocrisy unmasked, atheism confounded, detected fraud, triumphant resignation, the most prominent features of connubial, fraternal, kindred, connexion. In a word, the heads of that infinite variety which Dante has minutely scattered over his poem, — all domestic, politic, religious relations; whatever is not local in virtue and in vice: and the sublimity of the greatest of all events, would have been merely the minister of sympathies and passions.*

* Much has been said of the loss we have suffered in the marginal drawings which Michelangelo drew in his Dante. Invention may have suffered in being deprived of them; they can, however, have been little more than hints of a size too minute to admit of much discrimination. The true terrors of Dante depend as much upon the medium in which he shows, or gives us a glimpse of his figures, as on their form. The characteristic outlines of his fiends, Michelangelo personified in the demons of the Last Judgment, and invigorated the undisguised appetite, ferocity or craft of the brute, by traits of human malignity, cruelty, or lust. The Minos of Dante, in Messer Biagio da Cesena, and his Charon, have been recognised by all; but less the shivering wretch held over the

If opinions be divided on the respective advantages and disadvantages of these two modes ; if to some it should appear, though from consideration of the plan which guided Michelangelo, I am far from subscribing to their notions, that the scenery of the Last Judgment might have gained more by the dramatic introduction of varied pathos, than it would have lost by the dereliction of its generic simplicity. There can, I believe, be but one opinion with regard to the methods adopted by him and Raphael in the invention of the moment that characterises the creation of Eve. Both artists applied for it to their own minds, but with very different success. The elevation of Michelangelo's soul, inspired by the operation of creation itself, furnished him at once with

barge by a hook, and evidently taken from the following passage in the xxiind of the Inferno : —

Et Graffiacan, che gli era più di contra
Gli arronciglió l'impegolate chiome ;
E trasse 'l sù, che mi parve una lontra.

None has noticed as imitations of Dante in the xxivth book the astonishing groups in the Lunetta of the brazen serpent ; none the various hints from the Inferno and Purgatorio scattered over the attitudes and expressions of the figures rising from their graves. In the Lunetta of Haman, we owe the sublime conception of his figure to the subsequent passage in the xviith c. of Purgatory :

Poi piobbe dentro all' alta phantasia
Un Crucifisso, dispettoso e fiero
Nella sua vista, e cotal si moria.

The bassorilievo on the border of the second rock, in Purgatory, furnished the idea of the Annunziata, painted by Marcello Venusti from his design, in the sacristy of San Giov. Laterano, by order of Tommaso de' Cavalieri, the select friend and favourite of Michelangelo.

We are told that Michelangelo represented the Ugolino of Dante enclosed in the tower of Pisa : if he did, his own work is lost; but if, as some suppose, the bassorilievo of that subject by Pierino da Vinci be taken from his idea, notwithstanding the greater latitude which the sculptor might claim in divesting the figures of drapery and costume, he appears to me to have erred in the means employed to rouse our sympathy. A sullen but muscular character, with groups of muscular bodies and forms of strength, about him, with the allegoric figure of the Arno at their feet, and that of famine hovering over their heads, are not the fierce Gothic chief, deprived of revenge, brooding over despair in the stony cage ; are not the exhausted agonies of a father, petrified by the helpless groans of an expiring family, offering their own bodies for his food, to prolong his life.

the feature that stamps on human nature its most glorious prerogative, whilst the characteristic subtilty, rather than sensibility of Raphael's mind, in this instance, offered nothing but a frigid succedaneum, a symptom incident to all, when after the subsided astonishment on a great and sudden event, the mind recollecting itself, ponders on it with inquisitive surmise. In Michelangelo, all self-consideration is absorbed in the sublimity of the sentiment which issues from the august Presence that attracts Eve; "her earthly," in Milton's expression, "by his heavenly overpowered," pours itself in *adoration:* whilst in the inimitable cast of Adam's figure, we trace the hint of that half conscious moment when sleep began to give way to the vivacity of the dream inspired. In Raphael, creation is complete: Eve is presented to Adam, now awake; but neither the new-born charms, the submissive grace and virgin purity of the beauteous image, nor the awful presence of her Introductor, draw him from his mental trance into effusions of love or gratitude; at ease reclined, with fingers pointing at himself and his new mate, he seems to methodise the surprising event that took place during his sleep, and to whisper the words, "flesh of my flesh."

Thus, but far better adapted, has Raphael personified *Dialogue*, moved the lips of *Soliloquy*, unbent or wrinkled the features, and arranged the limbs and gesture of *Meditation*, in the pictures of the Parnassus and of the School of Athens, parts of the immense allegoric drama that fills the stanzas, and displays the brightest ornament of the Vatican: the immortal monument of the towering ambition, unlimited patronage, and refined taste of Julius II. and Leo X., its cycle represents the origin, the progress, extent, and final triumph of *church empire*, or ecclesiastic government. In the first subject, of the Parnassus, poetry, led back to its origin and first duty, the herald and interpreter of a first cause, in the universal language of imagery addressed to the senses, unites man, scattered and savage, in social and religious bands. What was the surmise of the eye and the wish of hearts, is gradually made the result of reason, in the characters of the School of Athens, by the researches of philosophy, which, from bodies to mind, from corporeal harmony to moral fitness, and from the duties of society, ascends to the doctrine of God and hopes of immortality.

Here revelation in its stricter sense commences, and conjecture becomes a glorious reality. In the composition of the Dispute on the Sacrament, the Saviour, after ascension, seated on his throne, the attested Son of God and Man, surrounded by his types, the prophets, patriarchs, apostles, and the hosts of heaven, institutes the mysteries, and initiates in his sacrament the heads and presbyters of the church militant, who in the awful presence of their Master and the celestial synod, discuss, explain, propound his doctrine. That the sacred mystery shall clear all doubt and subdue all heresy, is taught in the miracle of the blood-stained wafer; that without arms, by the arm of heaven itself, it shall release its votaries, and defeat its enemies, the deliverance of Peter, the overthrow of Heliodorus, the flight of Attila, the captive Saracens, bear testimony; that nature itself shall submit to its power, and the elements obey its mandates, the checked conflagration of the Borgo declares; till hastening to its ultimate triumphs, its union with the state, it is proclaimed by the vision of Constantine, confirmed by the rout of Maxentius, established by the imperial pupil's receiving baptism, and submitting to accept his crown at the feet of the mitred pontiff.

Such is the rapid outline of the cycle painted or designed by Raphael on the compartments of the stanzas sacred to his name. Here is the mass of his powers in poetic conception and execution; here is every period of his style, his emancipation from the narrow shackles of Pietro Perugino, his discriminations of characteristic form, on to the heroic grandeur of his line. Here is that master-tone of fresco painting, the real instrument of history, which, with its silver purity and breadth, unites the glow of Titian and Correggio's tints. Everywhere we meet the superiority of genius, but more or less impressive, with more or less felicity, in proportion as each subject was more or less susceptible of dramatic treatment. From the bland enthusiasm of the Parnassus, and the sedate or eager features of meditation in the School of Athens, to the sterner traits of dogmatic controversy in the Dispute of the Sacrament, and the symptoms of religious conviction or inflamed zeal at the Mass of Bolsena. Not the miracle, as we have observed, the fears and terrors of humanity inspire and seize us at the conflagration of the Borgo. If in

the Heliodorus the sublimity of the vision balances sympathy with astonishment, we follow the rapid ministers of grace to their revenge, less to rescue the temple from the gripe of sacrilege, than inspired by the palpitating graces, the helpless innocence, the defenceless beauty of the females and children scattered around; and thus we forget the vision of the labarum, the angels and Constantine in the battle, to plunge in the wave with Maxentius, or to share the agonies of the father who recognises his own son in the enemy he slew.

With what propriety Raphael introduced portrait, though in its most dignified and elevated sense, into some compositions of the great work which we are contemplating, I shall not now discuss: the allegoric part of the work may account for it. He has, however, by its admission, stamped that branch of painting at once with its essential feature — character, and has assigned it its place and rank. Ennobled by character, it rises to dramatic dignity; destitute of that, it sinks to mere mechanic dexterity, or floats, a bubble of fashion. Portrait is to historic painting in art, what physiognomy is to pathognomy in science. *That* shows the character and powers of the being which it delineates, in its formation, and at rest; *this* shows it in exertion. Bembo, Bramante, Dante, Gonzaga, Savonarola, Raphael himself, may be considered in the inferior light of mere characteristic ornament; but Julius II., authenticating the miracle at the mass of Bolsena, or borne into the temple, rather to authorise than to witness the punishment inflicted on its spoiler; Leo, with his train, calmly facing Attila, or deciding on his tribunal the fate of the captive Saracens, tell us by their presence that they are the heroes of the drama, that the action has been contrived for them, is subordinate to them, and has been composed to illustrate their character. For as in the epic, act and agent are subordinate to the maxim, and in pure history are mere organs of the fact; so the drama subordinates both fact and maxim to the agent, his character and passion. What in them was end, is but the medium here.

Such were the principles on which he treated the beautiful tale of Amor and Psyche.* The allegory of Apuleius became a drama under the hand of Raphael, though it must

* In the Farnesina: lately engraved by F. Schubert. — W.

be owned, that with every charm of scenic gradation and lyric imagery, its characters, as exquisitely chosen as acutely discriminated, exhibit less the obstacles and real object of affection, and its final triumph over mere appetite and sexual instinct, than the voluptuous history of his own favourite passion. The faint light of the maxim vanishes in the splendour which expands before our fancy the enchanted circle of wanton dalliance and amorous attachment.

But the power of Raphael's invention exerts itself chiefly in subjects where the drama, divested of epic or allegorical fiction, meets pure history, and elevates, invigorates, impresses the pregnant moment of a *real* fact, with character and pathos. The summit of these is that magnificent series of coloured designs commonly called the Cartoons, so well known to you all, part of which we happily possess; formerly, when complete and united, and now in the copies of the tapestry annually exhibited in the colonnade of the Vatican, they represent, in thirteen compositions, the origin, sanction, economy, and progress of the Christian religion.* In whatever light we consider their invention, as parts of *one whole* relative to each other, or independent *each of the rest*, and as single subjects, there can be scarcely named a beauty or a mystery of which the Cartoons furnish not an instance or a clue; they are poised between perspicuity and pregnancy of moment. We shall have opportunities to speak of all or the greater part of them, but that of Paul on the Areopagus will furnish us at present with conclusions for the remainder.

It represents the Apostle announcing his God from the heights of the Areopagus. Enthusiasm and curiosity make up the subject; simplicity of attitude invests the speaker with sublimity; the parallelism of his action invigorates his energy; situation gives him command over the whole; the

* The series of cartoons of which the seven now at Hampton Court formed a part were *ten* only in number, and their subject appears to be the history of the apostles in particular reference to the traditional or deputed authority of the Roman pontiff. The three lost cartoons are the Conversion of St. Paul, the Delivery of St. Paul from Prison, and the Stoning of St. Stephen. The tapestries which were made from them were disposed around the chair and altar of the papal chapel: they are now no longer used for church purposes, but are preserved with others in a gallery of the Vatican, built for them by Leo XII. See notes, *ante*. —W.

light in which he is placed attracts the first glance; he appears the organ of a superior power. The assembly, though selected with characteristic art for the purpose, are the natural offspring of place and moment. The involved meditation of the Stoic, the Cynic's ironic sneer, the incredulous smile of the elegant Epicurean, the eager disputants of the Academy, the elevated attention of Plato's school, the rankling malice of the Rabbi, the Magician's mysterious glance, repeat in louder or in lower tones the novel doctrine; but whilst curiosity and meditation, loud debate and fixed prejudice, tell, ponder on, repeat, reject, discuss it, the animated gesture of conviction in Dionysius and Damaris, announce the power of its tenets, and hint the established belief of *immortality.*

But the powers of Raphael, in combining the drama with pure historic fact, are best estimated when compared with those exerted by other masters on the same subject. For this we select from the series we examine that which represented the Massacre, as it is called, of the Innocents, or of the infants at Bethlem; an original, precious part of which still remains in the possession of a friend of art among us.* On this subject Baccio Bandinelli, Tintoretto, Rubens, Le Brun, and Poussin, have tried their various powers.

The Massacre of the Infants, by Baccio Bandinelli, contrived chiefly to exhibit his anatomic skill, is a complicated tableau of every contortion of human attitude and limbs that precedes dislocation; the expression floats between a studied imagery of frigid horror and loathsome abomination.

The stormy brush of Tintoretto swept individual woe away in general masses. Two immense wings of light and shade divide the composition, and hide the want of sentiment in tumult.

To Rubens, magnificence and contrast dictated the actors

* Mr. Prince Hoare, who bequeathed it to the Foundling Hospital, and it is now deposited in the National Gallery by the trustees of that institution. But this cartoon, as already stated, belongs to a distinct set of designs from those made for Leo X.; it is one of the designs of the series of twelve tapestries known as the Arazzi della Scuola Nuova, made from a set of designs supposed to have been ordered by Francis I., in 1519, from which the cartoons were not executed until after Raphael's death. Passavant, *Rafael von Urbino.* — W.

and the scene. A loud lamenting dame, in velvet robes, with golden locks dishevelled, and wide extended arms, meets our first glance. Behind, a group of steel-clad satellites open their rows of spears to admit the nimble, naked ministers of murder, charged with their infant prey, within their ranks, ready to close again against the frantic mothers who pursue them: the pompous gloom of the palace in the middle ground is set off by cottages and village scenery in the distance.

Le Brun surrounded the allegoric tomb of Rachel with rapid horsemen, receiving the children whom the assassins tore from their parents' arms, and strewed the field with infant slaughter.

Poussin tied in one vigorous group what he conceived of blood-trained villany and maternal frenzy. Whilst Raphael, in dramatic gradation, disclosed all the mother through every image of pity and of terror; through tears, shrieks, resistance, revenge, to the stunned look of despair; and traced the villain from the palpitations of scarce initiated crime to the sedate grin of veteran murder.

History, strictly so called, follows the drama: fiction now ceases, and invention consists only in selecting and fixing with dignity, precision, and sentiment, the moments of *reality*. Suppose that the artist choose the death of Germanicus,—he is not to give us the highest images of *general* grief which impresses the features of a people or a family at the death of a beloved chief or father; for this would be epic* imagery: we should have Achilles, Hector, Niobe. He is not to mix up characters which observation and comparison have pointed out to him as the fittest to excite the gradations of sympathy; not Admetus and Alceste, not Meleager and Atalante; for this would be the drama. He is to give us the idea of a Roman dying amidst Romans, as tradition gave him, with all the real modifications of time and place, which may serve unequivocally to discriminate that moment of grief from all others. Germanicus, Agrippina, Caius, Vitellius, the legates, the centurions at Antioch; the hero, the husband, the father, the friend, the leader, the struggles of nature and sparks of hope must be subjected to the physiognomic character and the

* See note, *ante*, p. 419. — W.

features of Germanicus, the son of Drusus, the Cæsar of Tiberius. Maternal, female, connubial passion, must be tinged by Agrippina, the woman absorbed in the Roman, less lover than companion of her husband's grandeur: even the bursts of friendship, attachment, allegiance, and revenge, must be stamped by the military, ceremonial, and distinctive costume of Rome.

The judicious observation of all this does not reduce the historic painter to the anxiously minute detail of a copyist. Firm he rests on the true basis of art, imitation: the fixed character of things determines all in his choice, and mere floating accident, transient modes and whims of fashion, are still excluded. If defects, if deformities are represented, they must be permanent, they must be inherent in the character. Edward I. and Richard III. must be marked, but marked, to strengthen rather than to diminish the interest we take in the man; thus the deformity of Richard will add to his terror, and the enormous stride of Edward to his dignity. If my limits permitted, your own recollection would dispense me from expatiating in examples on this more familiar branch of invention. The history of our own times and of our own country, has produced a specimen, in the death of a military hero, as excellent as often imitated, which, though respect forbids me to name it, cannot, I trust, be absent from your mind.*

Such are the stricter outlines of general and specific invention in the three principal branches of our art; but as their near alliance allows not always a strict discrimination of their limits; as the mind and fancy of men, upon the whole, consist of mixed qualities, we seldom meet with a human performance exclusively made up of epic, dramatic, or pure historical materials.

Novelty and feelings will make the rigid historian sometimes launch out into the marvellous, or warm his bosom and extort a tear; the dramatist, in gazing at some tremendous feature, or the pomp of superior agency, will drop the chain of sympathy and be absorbed in the sublime; whilst the epic or lyric painter forgets his solitary grandeur, sometimes descends and mixes with his agents. Thus Homer gave the feature of the drama in Hector and Andromache

* West's Death of General Wolfe. — W.

in Irus and Ulysses; the spirit from the prison-house stalks like the shade of Ajax, in Shakspere; the daughter of Soranus pleading for her father, and Octavia encircled by centurions, melt like Ophelia and Alceste, in Tacitus; thus Raphael personified the genius of the river in Joshua's passage through the Jordan, and again at the ceremony of Solomon's inauguration; and thus Poussin raised before the scared eye of Coriolanus, the frowning vision of Rome, all armed, with her attendant, Fortune.

These general excursions from one province of the art into those of its congenial neighbours, granted by judicious invention to the artist, let me apply to the grant of a more specific licence.* Horace, the most judicious of critics, when treating on the use of poetic words, tells his pupils that the adoption of an old word, rendered novel by a skilful construction with others, will entitle the poet to the praise of original diction. The same will be granted to the judicious adoption of figures in art.

Far from impairing the originality of invention, the unpremeditated discovery of an appropriate attitude or figure in the works of antiquity, or of the great old masters after the revival, and its adoption, or the apt transposition of one misplaced in some inferior work, will add lustre to a performance of commensurate or superior power, by a kind coalition with the rest, immediately furnished by nature and the subject. In such a case it is easily discovered whether a subject have been chosen merely to borrow an idea, an attitude or figure, or whether their eminent fitness procured them their place. An adopted idea or figure in a work of genius is a foil or a companion of the rest; but an idea of genius borrowed by mediocrity, tears all associate shreds,—it is the giant's thumb, by which the pigmy offered the measure of his own littleness. We stamp the plagiary on the borrower, who, without fit materials or adequate conceptions of his own, seeks to shelter impotence under purloined vigour; we leave him with the full praise of invention, who, by the harmony of a whole, proves that what he adopted might have been his own offspring, though anticipated by

* Dixeris egregiè, notum si callida verbum
Reddiderit junctura novum.
Q. Horat. Flacci de A. P. v. 47.

another. If he take now, he soon may give. Thus Michelangelo scattered the Torso of Apollonius in every view, in every direction, in groups and single figures, over the composition of the Last Judgment; and in the Lunetta of Judith and her Maid gave an original turn to figures adopted from the gem of Pier Maria da Pescia: if the figure of Adam dismissed from Paradise, by Raphael, still own Masaccio for its inventor, he can scarcely be said to have furnished more than the hint of that enthusiasm and energy which we admire in Paul on the Areopagus: in the picture of the Covenant with Noah, the sublimity of the vision, and the graces of the mother entangled by her babes, find their originals in the Sistine Chapel, but they are equalled by the fervour which conceived the Patriarch, who, with the infant pressed to his bosom, with folded hands, and prostrate on his knees, adores. What figure or what gesture in the Cartoon of Pisa has not been imitated? Raphael, Parmigiano, Poussin, are equally indebted to it; in the Sacrament of Baptism, the last did little more than transcribe that knot of powers, the fierce feature of the veteran, who, eager to pull on his clothes, pushes his foot through the rending garment. Such are the indulgencies which invention grants to fancy, taste, and judgment.

But a limited fragment of observations must not presume to exhaust what in itself is inexhaustible; the features of invention are multiplied before me as my powers decrease: I shall, therefore, no longer trespass on your patience, than by fixing your attention for a few moments on one of its boldest flights—the Transfiguration of Raphael; a performance equally celebrated and censured; in which the most judicious of inventors, the painter of propriety, is said to have not only wrestled for extent of information with the historian, but attempted to leap the boundaries, and, with a less discriminating than daring hand, to remove the established limits of the art, to have arbitrarily combined two actions, and consequently two different moments.

Were this charge founded, I might content myself with observing, that the Transfiguration, more than any other of Raphael's oil-pictures, was a public performance, destined by Juliano de Medici, afterwards Clement VII., for his archiepiscopal church at Narbonne; that it was painted in

contest with Sebastian del Piombo, assisted in his rival picture of Lazarus, by Michelangelo; and thus, considering it as framed on the simple principles of the monumental style, established in my first discourse on the pictures of Polygnotus, at Delphi, I might frame a plausible excuse for the modern artist; but Raphael is above the assistance of subterfuge, and it is sufficient to examine the picture, in order to prove the futility of the charge. Raphael has connected with the transfiguration, not the *cure* of the maniac, but his *presentation for it;* if, according to the* Gospel record, this happened at the foot of the mountain, whilst the apparition took place at the top, what improbability is there in assigning the *same moment* to both?

Raphael's design was to represent Jesus as the Son of God, and at the same time as the reliever of human misery, by an unequivocal fact. The transfiguration on Tabor, and the miraculous cure which followed the descent of Jesus, united, furnished that fact. The difficulty was how to combine two successive actions in one moment: he overcame it by sacrificing the moment of the cure to that of the apparition, by implying the lesser miracle in the greater. In subordinating the cure to the vision he obtained sublimity, in placing the crowd and the patient on the foreground, he gained room for the full exertion of his dramatic powers; it was not necessary that the demoniac should be represented in the moment of recovery, if its certainty could be expressed by other means; it is implied, it is placed beyond all doubt by the glorious apparition above; it is made nearly intuitive by the uplifted hand and finger of the apostle in the centre, who without hesitation, undismayed by the obstinacy of the demon, unmoved by the clamour of the crowd and the pusillanimous scepticism of some of his companions, refers the father of the maniac in an authoritative manner for certain and speedy help to his master† on the

* Matt. xvii. 5, 6. See Fiorillo, *Geschichte*, &c. 104. seq.

† The vision on Tabor, as represented here, is the most characteristic produced by modern art; whether we consider the action of the apostles overpowered by the divine effulgence, and divided between adoration and astonishment, or the forms of the prophets ascending like flame, and attracted by the lucid centre, or the majesty of Jesus himself, whose countenance is the only one we know expressive of his superhuman nature. That the unison of such powers should not, for once, have disarmed the burlesque of the French critic, rouses equal surprise and indignation.

mountain above, whom, though unseen, his attitude at once connects with all that passes below; here is the point of contact, here is that union of the two parts of the fact in one moment, which Richardson and Falconet could not discover.

Lecture IV. — Invention (*continued*).

Choice of subjects: divided into positive, negative, repulsive. — Observations on the Parerga, or Accessories of Invention.

The imitation of nature, as it presents itself in space and figure, being the real sphere of plastic invention, it follows, that whatever can occupy a place and be circumscribed by lines, characterised by form, substantiated by colour and light and shade, without provoking incredulity, shocking our conception by absurdity, averting our eye by loathsomeness or horror, is strictly within its province: but though all nature seem to teem with objects of imitation, the "choice" of subjects is a point of great importance to the artist; the conception, the progress, the finish, and the success of his work depend upon it. An apt and advantageous subject rouses and elevates invention, invigorates, promotes, and adds delight to labour; whilst a dull or repulsive one breeds obstacles at every step, dejects and wearies — the artist loses his labour, the spectator his expectation.

The first demand on every work of art is that it constitute one whole, that it fully pronounce its own meaning, that it tell itself; it ought to be independent; the essential part of its subject ought to be comprehended and understood without collateral assistance, without borrowing its commentary from the historian or the poet; for as we are soon wearied with a poem whose fable and motives reach us only by the borrowed light of annexed notes, so we turn our eye discontented from a picture or a statue whose meaning depends on the charity of a Cicerone, or must be fetched from a book.

As the condition that each work of art should fully and essentially tell its own tale, undoubtedly narrows the quantity of admissible objects, singly taken, to remedy this, to

enlarge the range of subjects, invention has contrived by a cyclus or series to tell the most important moments of a long story,—its beginning, its middle, and its end; for though some of these may not, in themselves, admit of distinct discrimination, they may receive and impart light by connexion.

Of him who undertakes thus to personify a tale, the first demand is, that his invention dwells on the firm basis of the story, on its most important and significant moments, or its principal actors. Next, as the nature of the art which is confined to the apparition of single moments forces him to leap many intermediate ones, he cannot be said to have invented with propriety, if he neglect imperceptibly to fill the chasm occasioned by their omission; and, finally, that he shall not interrupt or lose the leading thread of his plan in quest of episodes, in the display of subordinate or adventitious beauties. On the observation of these rules depends the perspicuity of his work, the interest we take in it, and, consequently, all that can be gained by the adoption of an historic series.

When form, colour, with conception and execution, are deducted from a work, its subject, the unwrought stuff only, the naked materials remain, and these we divide into three classes.

The first are positive, advantageous, commensurate with and adapted for the art. The whole of the work lies prepared in their germ, and spontaneously meets the rearing hand of the artist.

The second class, composed of subjects negative and uninteresting in themselves, depends entirely on the manner of treating; such subjects owe what they can be to the genius of the artist.

The repulsive, the subjects which cannot pronounce their own meaning, constitute the third class. On them genius and talent are equally wasted, because the heart has no medium to render them intelligible. Taste and execution may recommend them to our eye, but never can make them generally impressive, or stamp them with perspicuity.

To begin with advantageous subjects, immediately above the scenes of vulgar life, — of animals, and common landscape, — the simple representation of actions purely human appears to be as nearly related to the art as to ourselves;

their effect is immediate; they want no explanation; from them, therefore, we begin our scale. The next step leads us to pure historic subjects, singly or in a series; beyond these the delineation of character, or, properly speaking, the drama, invites; immediately above this we place the epic, with its mythologic, allegoric, and symbolic branches.

On these four branches of Invention, as I have treated diffusely in the lecture published on this subject*, and since successively in these prelections, I shall not at present circumstantially dwell, but as succinctly as possible remind you only of their specific difference and elements.

The first class, which, without much boldness of metaphor, may be said to draw its substance immediately from the lap of nature, to be as elemental as her emotions, and the passions by which she sways us, finds its echo in all hearts, and imparts its charm to every eye; from the mutual caresses of maternal affection and infant simplicity, the whispers of love or eruptions of jealousy and revenge, to the terrors of life, struggling with danger, or grappling with death. The Madonnas of Raphael; the Ugolino, the Paolo and Frances of Dante; the Conflagration of the Borgo, the Niobe protecting her daughter; Hæmon piercing his own breast, with Antigone hanging dead from his arm†, owe the sympathies they call forth to their assimilating power, and not to the names they bear: without names, without reference to time and place, they would impress with equal energy, because they find their counterpart in every breast, and speaks the language of mankind. Such were the Phantasiæ of the ancients, which modern art, by indiscriminate laxity of application, in what is called Fancy-Pictures, has more debased than imitated. A mother's and a lover's kiss acquire their value from the lips they press, and suffering deformity mingles disgust with pity.

Historic Invention administers to truth. History, as con-

* Fuseli published his first three Lectures, which were originally delivered in March 1801, in May of that year in 4to, with a dedication to William Lock, Esq. of Norbury Park. — W.

† The group in the Ludovisi, ever since its discovery, absurdly misnamed Pætus and Arria, notwithstanding some dissonance of taste and execution, may with more plausibility claim the title of Hæmon and Antigone.

tradistinguished from arbitrary or poetic narration, tells us not what might be, but what is or was; circumscribes the probable, the grand, and the pathetic, with truth of time, place, custom; gives "local habitation and a name:" its agents are the pure organs of a fact. Historic plans, when sufficiently distinct to be told, and founded on the basis of human nature, have that prerogative over mere natural imagery, that whilst they bespeak our sympathy, they interest our intellect. We were pleased with the former as men, we are attracted by this as members of society: bound round with public and private connexions and duties, taught curiosity by education, we wish to regulate our conduct by comparisons of analogous situations and similar modes of society: these history furnishes; transplants us into other times; empires and revolutions of empires pass before us with memorable facts and actors in their train — the legislator, the philosopher, the discoverer, the polishers of life, the warrior, the divine, are the principal inhabitants of this soil: it is perhaps unnecessary to add, that nothing trivial, nothing grovelling or mean, should be suffered to approach it. This is the department of Tacitus and Poussin. The exhibition of character in the conflict of passions with the rights, the rules, the prejudices of society, is the legitimate sphere of dramatic invention. It inspires, it agitates us by reflected self-love, with pity, terror, hope, and fear; whatever makes events, and time and place, the ministers of character and pathos, let fiction or reality compose the tissue, is its legitimate claim: it distinguishes and raises itself above historic representation by laying the chief interest on the *actors*, and moulding the *fact* into mere situations contrived for their exhibition: they are the end, this the medium. Such is the invention of Sophocles and Shakspere, and uniformly that of Raphael. The actors, who in Poussin and the rest of historic painters shine by the splendour of the fact, reflect it in Raphael with unborrowed rays: they are the luminous object to which the action points.

Of the epic plan, the loftiest species of human conception, the aim is to astonish whilst it instructs; it is the sublime allegory of a maxim. Here invention arranges a plan by general ideas, the selection of the most prominent features of nature, or favourable modes of society, visibly to substantiate

some great maxim.* If it admits history for its basis, it hides the limits in its grandeur; if it selects characters to conduct its plan, it is only in the genus, their features reflect, their passions are kindled by the maxim, and absorbed in its universal blaze: at this elevation heaven and earth mingle their boundaries, men are raised to demigods, and gods descend. This is the sphere of Homer, Phidias, and Michelangelo.

Allegory, or the personification of invisible physic and metaphysic ideas, though not banished from the regions of invention, is equally inadmissible in pure epic†, dramatic, and historic plans, because, wherever it enters, it must rule the whole.‡ It rules with propriety the mystic drama of the Vatican, where the characters displayed are only the varied instruments of a mystery by which the church was established, and Julio and Leone are the allegoric image, the representatives of that church; but the epic, dramatic, and historic painter embellish with poetry or delineate with truth what either was or is supposed to be real; they must therefore conduct their plans by personal and substantial agency, if

* This cannot be admitted as the definition of an epic, though such a production may be an epic. See note, *ante*. — W.

† This is a contradiction of what Fuseli has just stated, that an epic is "the sublime allegory of a maxim:" if the aim of maxim constitutes the epic, allegory is perfectly admissible. — W.

‡ The whole of the gallery of the Luxembourg [1] by Rubens is but a branch of its magnificence: general as the elements, universal and permanent as the affections of human nature, allegory breaks the fetters of time, it unites with boundless sway mythologic, feodal, local incongruities, fleeting modes of society, and fugitive fashions: thus, in the picture of Rubens, Minerva, who instructs, the Graces that surround the royal maiden at the poetic fount, are not what they are in Homer, the real tutress of Telemachus, the real dressers of Venus, they are the symbols only of the education which the princess received. In that sublime design of Michelangelo, where a figure is roused by a descending genius from his repose on a globe, on which he yet reclines, and with surprise discovers the phantoms of the passions which he courted, unmasked in wild confusion flitting round him, Michelangelo was less ambitious to express the nature of a dream, or to bespeak our attention to its picturesque effect and powerful contrasts than to impress us with the lesson, that all is vanity and life a farce, unless engaged by virtue and the pursuits of mind.

[1] See note, *ante*. — W.

they mean to excite that credibility, without which it is not in their power to create an interest in the spectator or the reader.

That great principle, the necessity of a moral tendency or of some doctrine useful to mankind in the *whole* of an epic performance, admitted, are we therefore to sacrifice the uniformity of its parts, and thus to lose that credibility which *alone* can impress us with the importance of the maxim that dictated to the poet narration and to the artist imagery? Are the agents sometimes to be real beings, and sometimes abstract ideas? Is the Zeus of Homer, of whose almighty will the bard, at the very threshold of his poem, proclaims himself only the herald, by the purblind acuteness of a commentator, to be turned into æther; and Juno, just arriving from her celestial toilet, changed into air, to procure from their mystic embraces the allegoric offspring of vernal impregnation? When Minerva, by her weight, makes the chariot of Diomede groan, and Mars wounded, roars with the voice of ten thousand, are they nothing but the symbol of military discipline, and the sound of the battle's roar? or Ate, seized by her hair, and by Zeus dashed from the battlements of heaven, is she only a metaphysic idea? Forbid it, Sense! As well might we say, that Milton, when he called the porteress of hell Satan's daughter, *Sin*, and his son and dread antagonist *Death*, meant only to impress us with ideas of privation and nonentity, and sacrificed the real agents of his poem to an unskilful choice of names? Yet it is their name that has bewildered his commentator and biographer in criticisms equally cold, repugnant, and incongruous, on the admissibility and inadmissibility of allegory in poems of supposed reality. What becomes of the interest the poet and the artist mean to excite in us, if, in the moment of reading or contemplating, we do not believe what the one tells and the other shows? It is that magic which places on the same basis of existence, and amalgamates the mythic or superhuman, and the human parts of the Ilias, of Paradise Lost, and of the Sistine Chapel, that enraptures, agitates, and whirls us along as readers or spectators.

When Poussin represented Coriolanus in the Volscian camp, he placed before him in suppliant attitude his mother, wife, and children, with a train of Roman matrons kneeling,

and behind them the erect and frowning form of an armed female, accompanied by another with streaming hair, recumbent on a wheel. On these two, unseen to all else, Coriolanus, perplexed in the extreme, in an attitude of despair, his sword half-drawn, as if to slay himself, fixes his scared eyes: who discovers not that he is in a trance, and in the female warrior recognises the tutelary genius of Rome, and her attendant Fortune, to terrify him into compliance? Shall we disgrace with the frigid conceit of an allegory the powerful invention which disclosed to the painter's eye the agitation in the Roman's breast and the proper moment for fiction? Who is not struck by the sublimity of a vision which, without diminishing the credibility of the fact, adds to its importance, and raises the hero, by making him submit not to the impulse of private ties, but to the imperious destiny of his country?

Among the paltry subterfuges contrived by dulness to palliate the want of invention, the laborious pedantry of emblems ranks foremost, by which arbitrary and conventional signs have been substituted for character and expression. If the assertion of Samuel Johnson, that the plastic arts "can illustrate, but cannot inform," be false as a general maxim, it gains an air of truth with regard to this hieroglyphic mode of exchanging substance for signs; and the story which he adds in proof of a young girl's mistaking the usual figure of Justice with a steel-yard for a cherry-woman, becomes here appropriate. The child had seen many stall and market-women, and always with a steel-yard or a pair of scales, but never a figure of Justice; and it might as well be pretended that one not initiated in the Egyptian mysteries should discover in the Scarabæus of an obelisk the summer solstice, as that a child, a girl, or a man not acquainted with Cesare Ripa*, or some other emblem-coiner, should find in a female holding a balance over her eyes, in another with a bridle in her hand, in a third leaning on a broken pillar, and in a fourth loaded with children, the symbols of Justice, Temperance, Fortitude, and Charity. If these signs be at all admissible, they ought, at least, to receive as much light from the form, the character, and expression of the figures they accompany, as they reflect on them, else they become

* See Note to Barry's Fourth Lecture. — W.

burlesque, instead of being attributes. Though this rage for emblem did not become epidemic before the lapse of the sixteenth century, when the Cavalieri of the art, the Zuccheri, Vasari and Portas undertook to deliver more work than their brains could furnish with thought, yet even the philosophers of the art, in the classic days of Julio and Leo, cannot be said to have been entirely free from it. What analogy is there between an ostrich at the side of a female with a balance in her hand, and the idea of Justice? Yet thus has Raphael represented her in the stanza of the Vatican. Nor has he been constant to the same emblem, as on the ceiling of another stanza, he has introduced her with a scale, and armed with a sword. The *Night* of Michelangelo, on the Medicean tombs*, might certainly be taken for what she professes to be, without the assistance of the mask, the poppies, and the owl at her feet, for the dominion of sleep is personified in her expression and posture: perhaps even her beautiful companion, whose faintly stretching attitude and half-opened eyes express the symptoms of approaching *morn*, might be conceived for its representative†; but no stretch of fancy can, in their male associates, reach the symbols of *full day* and *eve*, or in the females of the monument of Julio II.‡ the ideas of *contemplative* and *active life*.

To means so arbitrary, confused, and precarious the ancients never descended: their general ideas had an uniform and general typus, which invention never presumed to alter or to transgress; but this typus lay less in the attributes than in the character and form. The inverted torch and moon-flower were the accompaniments, and not the substitutes, of *Death* and *Sleep;* neither *Psyche* nor *Victory* depended on her wings. Mercury was recognised without the caduceus or purse, and Apollo without his bow or lyre; various and similar, the branches of one family, their leading lines descended from that full type of majesty which Phidias, the architect of gods, had stamped on his Jupiter. Whether we ought to consider the son of Charmidas as the inventor or the regulator of this supreme and irremovable

* The tombs of Giuliano and Lorenzo de' Medici in the chapel of the Medici, in the church of San Lorenzo at Florence. — W.

† L'Aurora Sonnacchiosa.

‡ In the church of San Pietro in Vinculis at Rome. — W.

standard, matters not: from *him* the ancient writers date the epoch of mythic invention; no revolutions of style changed the character of his forms, talent only polished with more or less success what his laws had established. Phidias, says Quintilian, was framed to form gods; Phidias, says Pliny, gave in his Jupiter a new motive to religion.

Whether or not, after the restoration of art, the Supreme Being, the eternal essence of incomprehensible perfection, ought ever to have been approached by the feeble efforts of human conception, it is not my office to discuss. Perhaps it ought not; but since it has,—as the Roman Church has embodied divine substance, and called on our arts for an auxiliary, it was to be expected that, to make assistance effectual, a full type, a supreme standard of form, should have been established for the author and the agents of the sacred circle: but, be it from the tyranny of religious barbarians, or inability, or to avoid the imputation of copying each other, painters and sculptors, widely differing among themselves in the conception of divine or sainted form and character, agree in nothing but attributes and symbols: triangular glories, angelic ministry and minstrelsy, the colours of the drapery; the cross, the spear, the stigmata; the descending dove; in implements of ecclesiastic power or instruments of martyrdom.

The Biblic expression, as it is translated, "of the Ancient of Days"—which means, "He that existed before time," furnished the primitive artists, instead of an image of supreme majesty, only with the hoary image of age: and such a figure borne along by a globe of angels, and crowned with a kind of episcopal mitre, recurs on the bronzes of Lorenzo Ghiberti. The sublime mind of Michelangelo, soaring beyond the idea of decrepitude and puny formality, strove to form a type in the elemental energy of the Creator of Adam, and darted life from his extended hand, but in the Creator of Eve sunk again to the idea of age. Raphael strove to compound a form from Michelangelo and his predecessors, to combine energy and rapidity with age: in the Loggia he follows Michelangelo, in the Stanza the prior artists; here his gods are affable and mild, there rapid, and perhaps more violent than energetic. After these two great names, it were profanation to name the attempts of their successors

The same fluctuation perplexes the effigy of the Saviour. Leonardo da Vinci attempted to unite power with calm serenity, but in the Last Supper alone presses on our hearts by humanity of countenance. The Infant Christ of Michelangelo is a superhuman conception; but as man and Redeemer with his cross, in the Minerva, he is a figure as mannered in form and attitude, as averting by stern severity; and, as the Judge of Mankind in the Last Judgment, he seems to me as unworthy of the artist's mind as of his master-mind. The Christs of Raphael, as infants, are seldom more than lovely children; as a man, the painter has poised his form between church tradition and the dignified mildness of his own character.

Two extremes appear to have co-operated to impede the establishment of a type in the formation of the Saviour: by one he is converted into a character of mythology, the other debases him to the dregs of mankind.

"The character corresponding with that of Christ," says Mengs*, "ought to be a compound of the characters of Jupiter and of Apollo, allowing only for the accidental expression of the moment." What magic shall amalgamate the superhuman airs of Rhea's and Latona's sons, with patience in suffering and resignation? The critic in his exultation forgot the leading feature of his Master — condescending humility. In the race of Jupiter majesty is often tempered by emanations of beauty and of grace, but never softened to warm humanity. Here lies the knot: —

The Saviour of mankind extending his arm to relieve, without visible means, the afflicted, the hopeless, the dying, the dead, is a subject that visits with awe the breast of every one who calls himself after his name: the artist is in the sphere of adoration.

An exalted sage descending to every beneficent office of humanity, instructing ignorance, not only forgiving but excusing outrage, pressing his enemy to his breast, commands the sympathy of every man, though he be no believer: the artist is in the sphere of sentiment.

* Speaking of the figure of Christ by Raphael in the Madonna dello Spasimo, he calls it "Una Figura d'un Carattere fra quel di Giove, e quello d'Apollo; quale effettivamente deve esser quello, che corrisponde a Cristo, aggiungendovi soltanto l'espressione accidentale della passione, in cui si rappresenta."— *Opere*, 11. 83.

But a mean man, marked with the features of a mean race, surrounded by a beggarly, ill-shaped rabble and stupid crowds — may be mistaken for a juggler, that claims the attention of no man. Of this let art beware.

From these observations on positive we now proceed to the class of *negative* subjects. Negative we call those which in themselves possess little that is significant, historically true or attractive, pathetic or sublime, which leave our heart and fancy listless and in apathy, though by the art with which they are executed they allure and retain the eye: here, if ever, the artist creates his own work, in raising, by ingenious combination, that to a positive subject which in its parts is none, or merely passive.

The first rank among these claims that mystic class of monumental pictures, allusive to mysteries of religion and religious institutions, asylums, charities; or votive pictures of those who dedicate offerings of gratitude for life saved or happiness conferred: in these the male and female patrons of such creeds, societies and persons, prophets, apostles, saints, warriors and doctors, with and without the donor or the suppliant, combine in apposition or groups, and are suffered to flank each other without incurring the indignation due to anachronism, as they are always placed in the presence of the Divine Being, before whom the distance of epochs, place and races, the customs, dress and habits of different nations, are supposed to vanish; and the present, past, and future to exist in the same moment.

These, which the simplicity of primitive art dismissed without more invention than elevating the Madonna with the infant Saviour, and arranging the saints and suppliants in formal parallels beneath. the genius of greater masters often, though not always, transformed to organs of sublimity or connected in an assemblage of interesting and highly pleasing groups, by inventing a congruous action or scenery, which spread warmth over a subject that, simply considered, threatened to freeze the beholder. Let us give an instance.

The Madonna, called Dell' Impannato, by Raphael, is one of these: it is so called because he introduced in the background the old Italian linen or paper window. Maria is represented standing or raising herself to offer the Infant to St. Elizabeth, who stretches out her arms to receive him.

Mary Magdalen behind, and bending over her, points to St. John, and caresses the child; he, with infantine joy, escapes from her touch, and looking at her, leaps up to his mother's neck. St. John, as the principal figure, is placed in the fore-ground on a leopard's skin, and with raised hand seems to prophesy of Christ; he appears to be eight or ten years old, Christ scarcely two. At this anachronism, or the much bolder one committed in the admission of Mary Magdalen, who was probably younger than Christ, those only will be shocked who have not considered the nature of a votive picture: this was dedicated to St. John, as the tutelary saint of Florence, and before it was transferred to the Pitti Gallery, was the altar-piece in a domestic chapel of the Medicean family.*

The greater part of this audience are acquainted, some are familiar, with the celebrated painting of Correggio, formerly treasured in the Pilotta of Parma transported to the Louvre and again replaced. In the invention of this work, which exhibits St. Jerome, to whom it is dedicated, presenting his translation of the Scriptures, by the hand of an angel, to the infant seated in the lap of the Madonna, the patron of the piece is sacrificed in place to the female and angelic group which occupies the middle. The figure that chiefly attracts, has, by its suavity, for centuries attracted, and still absorbs the general eye, is that charming one of the Magdalen, in a half kneeling, half recumbent posture, pressing the foot of Jesus to her lips. By doing this, the painter has, undoubtedly, offered to the Graces the boldest and most enamoured sacrifice which they ever received from art. He has been rewarded, accordingly, for the impropriety of her usurping the first glance, which ought to fix itself on the Divinity, and the Saint vanishes in the amorous gaze on her charms. If the Magdalen has long possessed the right of being present where the Madonna presides, she ought to assist the purpose of the picture in subordinate entreaty; her action should have been that of supplication; as it is, it is the effusion of fondling, unmixed love.

The true medium between dry apposition and exuberant contrast, appears to have been kept by Titian, in an altar-

* It is engraved by Villamena.

piece of the Franciscans, or Frati, in spite of French selection, still at Venice*; and of which the simple grandeur has been balanced by Reynolds against the artificial splendour of Rubens in a similar subject. It probably was what it represents, the thanks-offering of a noble family, for some victory obtained, or conquest made in the Morea. The heads of the family, male and female, presented by St. Francis, occupy the two wings of the composition, kneeling, and with hands joined in prayer, in attitudes nearly parallel. Elevated in the centre, St. Peter stands at the altar, between two columns, his hand in the Gospel-book, the keys before him, addressing the suppliants. Above him, to the right, appears the Madonna, holding the infant, and with benign countenance, seems to sanction the ceremony. Two stripling cherubs on an airy cloud, right over the centre, rear the cross; an armed warrior with the standard of victory, and behind him a turbaned Turk or Moor, approach from the left and round the whole.

Such is the invention of a work, which, whilst it fills the mind, refuses utterance to words; of which it is difficult to say, whether it subdue more by simplicity, command by dignity, persuade by propriety, assuage by repose, or charm by contrast. A great part of these groups consists of portraits in habiliments of the time, deep, vivid, brilliant; but all are completely subject to the tone of gravity that emanates from the centre; a sacred silence enwraps the whole; all gleams and nothing flashes. Steady to his purpose, and penetrated by his motive, though brooding over every part of his work, the artist appears nowhere.†

Next to this higher class of negative subjects, though much lower, may be placed the magnificence of ornamental painting, the pompous machinery of Paolo Veronese, Pietro da Cortona, and Rubens. Splendour, contrast, and profusion are the springs of its invention. The painter, not the story, is the principal subject here. Dazzled by piles of Palladian architecture, tables set out with regal luxury, terraces of plate, crowds of Venetian nobles, pages, dwarfs, gold-collared Moors, and choirs of vocal and instrumental

* The altar-piece of the Pesaro Family in Santa Maria dei Frari.—W.

† The composition, and in some degree the lines, but neither its tone nor effect, may be found among the etchings of Le Fevre.

music, embrowned and tuned by meridian skies, what eye has time to discover, in the brilliant chaos, the visit of Christ to Simon the Pharisee, or the sober nuptials of Cana? but when the charm dissolves, though avowedly wonders of disposition, colour, and unlimited powers of all-grasping execution, if considered in any other light than as the luxurious trappings of ostentatious wealth, judgment must pronounce them ominous pledges of irreclaimable depravity of taste, glittering masses of portentous incongruities and colossal baubles.

The next place to representation of pomp among negative subjects, but far below, we assign to Portrait. Not that characteristic portrait by which Silanion, in the face of Apollodorus, personified habitual indignation; Apelles, in Alexander, superhuman ambition: Raphael, in Julio II., pontifical fierceness; Titian, in Paul III., testy age with priestly subtilty; and in Machiavelli and Cæsar Borgia, the wily features of conspiracy and treason. Not that portrait by which Rubens contrasted the physiognomy of philosophic and classic acuteness with that of genius in the conversation-piece of Grotius, Meursius, Lipsius, and himself; not the nice and delicate discriminations of Vandyck, nor that power which, in our days, substantiated humour in Sterne, comedy in Garrick, and mental and corporeal strife, to use his own words, in Samuel Johnson. On that broad basis, portrait takes its exalted place between history and the drama. The portrait I mean is that common one, as widely spread as confined in its principle; the remembrancer of insignificance, mere human resemblance, in attitude without action, features without meaning, dress without drapery, and situation without propriety. The aim of the artist and the sitter's wish are confined to external likeness; that deeper, nobler aim, the personification of character, is neither required, nor, if obtained, recognised. The better artist, condemned to this task, can here only distinguish himself from his duller brother by execution, by invoking the assistance of back-ground, chiaroscuro and picturesque effects, and thus sometimes produces a work which delights the eye, and leaves us, whilst we lament the misapplication, with a strong impression of his power; him we see, not the insignificant individual that usurps the centre, one we never

saw, care not if we never see, and if we do, remember not, for his head can personify nothing but his opulence or his pretence ; it is furniture.

If any branch of art be once debased to a mere article of fashionable furniture, it will seldom elevate itself above the taste and the caprice of the owner, or the dictates of fashion; for its success depends on both ; and though there be not a bauble thrown by the sportive hand of fashion which taste may not catch to advantage, it will seldom be allowed to do it, if fashion dictate the mode. Since liberty and commerce have more levelled the ranks of society, and more equally diffused opulence, private importance has been increased, family connexions and attachments have been more numerously formed, and hence portrait-painting, which formerly was the exclusive property of princes, or a tribute to beauty, prowess, genius, talent, and distinguished character, is now become a kind of family calendar, engrossed by the mutual charities of parents, children, brothers, nephews, cousins, and relatives of all colours.

To portrait-painting, thus circumstanced, we subjoin, as the last branch of uninteresting subjects, that kind of landscape which is entirely occupied with the tame delineation of a given spot: an enumeration of hill and dale, clumps of trees, shrubs, water, meadows, cottages, and houses; what is commonly called views. These, if not assisted by nature, dictated by taste, or chosen for character, may delight the owner of the acres they enclose, the inhabitants of the spot, perhaps the antiquary or the traveller, but to every other eye they are little more than topography.* The landscape of Titian, of Mola, of Salvator, of the Poussins, Claude, Rubens, Elzheimer, Rembrandt, and Wilson, spurns all relation with this kind of map-work. To them nature disclosed her bosom in the varied light of rising, meridian, setting suns; in twilight, night, and dawn. Height, depth, solitude, strike, terrify, absorb, bewilder, in their scenery. We tread on

* The above remarks upon portraits and landscapes may not unfairly, perhaps, be adduced as a specimen of *subjective* criticism — the expression of individual feeling, not of unbiassed judgment. Fuseli was notorious for his incapacity of *objective* representation, and we here have his peculiarity markedly characterising his criticism. — W.

classic or romantic ground, or wander through the characteristic groups of rich congenial objects. The usual choice of the Dutch school, which frequently exhibits no more than the transcript of a spot, borders, indeed, nearer on the negative kind of landscape; but imitation will not be entitled to the pleasure we receive, or the admiration we bestow, on their genial works, till it has learnt to give an air of choice to necessity, to imitate their hues, spread their masses, and to rival the touch of their pencil.

Subjects which cannot in their whole compass be brought before the eye, which appeal for the best part of their meaning to the erudition of the spectator and the refinements of sentimental enthusiasm, seem equally to defy the powers of invention. The labour of disentangling the former dissolves the momentary magic of the first impression, and leaves us cold; the second evaporates under the grosser touch of sensual art. It may be more than doubted whether the resignation of Alcestis can ever be made intuitive. The pathos of the story consists in the heroic resolution of Alcestis to save her husband's life by resigning her own. Now the art can show no more than Alcestis dying. The cause of her death, her elevation of mind, the disinterested heroism of her resolution to die, are beyond its power.

Raphael's celebrated Donation of the Keys to St. Peter in the cartoon before us, as ineffectually struggles with more than the irremovable obscurity, with the ambiguity of the subject. A numerous group of grave and devout characters, in attitudes of anxious debate and eager curiosity, press forward to witness the behests of a person who, with one hand, seems to have consigned two massy keys to their foremost companion on his knees, and with the other hand points to a flock of sheep, grazing behind. What associating power can find the connexion between those keys and the pasturing herd? or discover in an obtrusive allegory the only real motive of the emotions that inspire the apostolic group? The artist's most determined admirer, if not the slave of pontifical authority, ready to substantiate whatever comes before him, must confine his homage to the power that interests us in a composition without a subject.*

Richardson says on this subject: — "The intention of this picture was, doubtless, to honour the Papal dignity. St. Peter was to be here

Poussin's extolled picture of the Testament of Eudamidas is another proof of the inefficacy to represent the enthusiasm of sentiment by the efforts of art. The figures have simplicity, the expression energy, it is well composed; in short, it possesses every requisite but that which alone could make it what it pretends to be. You see an elderly man on his death-bed; a physician, pensive, with his hand on the man's breast, his wife and daughter, desolate, at the foot of the bed; one, who resembles a notary, eagerly writing; a buckler and a lance on the wall; and the simple implements of the scene, tell us the former occupation and the circumstances of Eudamidas. But his legacy — the secure reliance on the friend to whom he bequeaths his daughter — the noble acceptance and magnanimity of that friend, — these we ought to see, and seek in vain for them; what is represented in the picture may be as well applied to any other man who died, made a will, left a daughter and a wife, as to the Corinthian Eudamidas.

This is not the only instance in which Poussin has mistaken erudition and detail of circumstances for evidence. The Exposition of Infant Moses on the Nile, is a picture as much celebrated as the former. A woman shoves a child, placed in a basket, from the shore. A man, mournfully pensive, walks off, followed by a boy, who turns towards the woman, and connects the groups. A girl in the background points to a distance, where we discover the Egyptian princess, and thus anticipate the fate of the child. The statue of a river god recumbent on the sphinx, a town with lofty temples, pyramids and obelisks, tell Memphis and the Nile; and smoking brick-kilns, still nearer, allude to the servitude and toil of Israel in Egypt. Not one circumstance is omitted that could contribute to explain the meaning of the whole; but the repulsive subject completely baffled the painter's endeavour to show the *real* motive of the action. We can-

represented in his brightest character, which consists in his having the keys, and the flock of Christ, committed to him; but this last being conferred on him after the other (for Christ was then risen from the dead, and the keys he was in possession of before the crucifixion), both histories could not be brought in without making a double picture. The first is therefore, expressed by his having the keys in his hand."—*Essays*, p. 56 — W.

not penetrate the *cause* that forces these people to expose the child on the river, and hence our sympathy and participation languish, we turn from a subject that gives us danger without fear, to admire the expression of the parts, the classic elegance, the harmony of colours, the mastery of execution.

The importance of some secondary points of invention, of scenery, background, drapery, ornament, is frequently such, that independent of the want of more essential parts, if possessed in a very eminent degree, they have singly raised from insignificance to esteem names that had few other rights to consideration ; and neglected, in spite of superior comprehension, in the choice or conception of a subject, in defiance of style, and perhaps of colour, of expression, and sometimes composition, often have left little but apathy to the contemplation of works produced by men of superior grasp and essential excellence. Fewer would admire Poussin were he deprived of his scenery, though I shall not assert, with Mengs, that in his works the subject is more frequently the appendix than the principle of the background. What right could the greater part of Andrea del Sarto's historic compositions claim to our attention, if deprived of the parallelism, the repose and space in which his figures are arranged, or the ample draperies that invest them, and hide with solemn simplicity their vulgarity of character and limbs. It often requires no inconsiderable degree of mental power and technic discrimination to separate the sublimity of Michelangelo and the pathos of Raphael, from the total neglect, or the incongruities of scenery and background, which frequently involve or clog their conceptions, to add by fancy the place on which their figures ought to stand, the horizon that ought to elevate or surround them, and the masses of light and shade indolently neglected, or sacrificed, to higher principles. How deeply the importance of scenery and situation, with their proper degree of finish, were felt by Titian, before and after his emancipation from the shackles of Giovanni Bellini, every work of his during the course of nearly a centenary practice proves. To select two from all, the Martyrdom of the Dominican Peter, that summary of his accumulated powers, and the Presentation of the Virgin, one of his first historic essays, owe, if not all, their greatest effect, to scenery. Loftiness, and solitude of site, assist the subli-

mity of the descending vision to consecrate the actors beyond what their characters and style of limbs could claim, and render the first an object of submissive admiration, whilst its simple grandeur renders the second one of cheerful and indulgent acquiescence; and reconciles us to a detail of portrait-painting, and the impropriety of associating domestic and vulgar imagery with a consecrated subject.

It is for these reasons that the importance of scenery and background has been so much insisted on by Reynolds, who frequently declared, that whatever preparatory assistance he might admit in the draperies, or other parts of his figures, he always made it a point to keep the arrangement of the scenery, the disposition, and ultimate finish of the background to himself.

By the choice and scenery of the background we are frequently enabled to judge how far a painter entered into his subject, whether he understood its nature, to what class it belonged, what impression it was capable of making, what passion it was calculated to rouse. The sedate, the solemn, the severe, the awful, the terrible, the sublime, the placid, the solitary, the pleasing, the gay, are stamped by it. Sometimes it ought to be negative, entirely subordinate, receding, or shrinking into itself; sometimes more positive, it acts, invigorates, assists the subject, and claims attention; sometimes its forms, sometimes its colour, ought to command. A subject in itself bordering on the usual or common, may become sublime or pathetic by the background alone, and a sublime or pathetic one may become trivial and uninteresting by it. A female leaning her head on her hand on a rock, might easily suggest itself to any painter of portrait; but the means of making this figure interesting to those who are not concerned in the likeness, were not to be picked from the mixtures of the palette. Reynolds found the secret in contrasting the tranquillity and repose of the person by a tempestuous sea and a stormy shore in the distance; and in another female, contemplating a tremulous sea by a placid moonlight, he connected elegance with sympathy and desire.

Whatever connects the individual with the elements, whether by abrupt or imperceptible means, is an instrument of sublimity, as, whatever connects it in the same manner

with, or tears it from the species, may become an organ of pathos. In this discrimination lies the rule by which our art, to astonish or move, ought to choose the scenery of its subjects. It is not by the accumulation of infernal or magic machinery, distinctly seen, by the introduction of Hecate and a chorus of female demons and witches, by surrounding him with successive apparitions at once, and a range of shadows moving above or before him, that Macbeth can be made an object of terror. To render him so you must place him on a ridge, his down-dashed eye absorbed by the murky abyss: surround the horrid vision with darkness, exclude its limits, and shear its light to glimpses.

This art of giving to the principal figure the command of the horizon, is perhaps the only principle by which modern art might have gained an advantage over that of the ancients, and improved the dignity of composition, had it been steadily pursued by its great restorers, the painters of Julio II. and Leo X., though we find it more attended to in the monumental imagery of the Cappella Sistina than in the Stanze and the cartoons of Raphael, which being oftener pathetic or intellectual than sublime, suffered less by neglecting it.

The same principle which has developed in the cone, the form generally most proper for composing a single figure or a group, contains the reason why the principal figure or group should be the most elevated object of a composition, and locally command the accidents of scenery and place. The Apollo of Belvedere, singly or in a group, was surely not composed to move at the bottom of a valley, nor the Zeus of Phidias to be covered with a roof.

The improprieties attendant on the neglect of this principle are, perhaps, in no work of eminence more offensively evident than in the celebrated Resuscitation of Lazarus by Sebastian del Piombo, whose composition, if composition it deserved to be called, seems to have been dictated by the background. It usurps the first glance; it partly buries, everywhere throngs, and, in the most important place, squeezes the subject into a corner. The horizon is at the top; Jesus, Maria, and Lazarus at the bottom of the scene. Though its plan and groups recede in diminished forms, they advance in glaring opaque colour, nor can it avail in excuse of the artist, to say that the multitude of figures admitted are characters

chosen to show in different modes of expression the effect of the miracle, whilst their number gives celebrity to it, and discriminates it from the obscure trick of a juggler. All this if it had been done, though perhaps it has not, for by far the greater part are not spectators, might have been done with subordination. The most authentic proof of the reality of the miracle ought to have beamed from the countenance of Him who performed it, and of the restored man's sister. In every work something must be first, something last; that is essential, this optional; that is present by its own right, this by courtesy and convenience.*

The rival picture of the Resuscitation of Lazarus, the Transfiguration of Christ by Raphael, avoids the inconvenience of indiscriminate crowding, and the impertinent *luxuriance* of scenery which we have censured, by the artifice of escaping from what is strictly called background, and excluding it altogether. The action on the foreground is the basis, and Christ the apex of the cone, and what they might have suffered from diminution of size is compensated by elevation and splendour. In sacrificing to this principle the rules of a perspective which he was so well acquainted with, Raphael succeeded to unite the beginning, the middle, and the end of the event which he represented in one moment. He escaped every atom of commonplace or unnecessary embellishment, with a simplicity, and so artless an air, that few but the dull, the petulant, and the pedant can refuse him their assent, admiration, and sympathy. If he has not, strictly speaking, embodied possibility, he has perhaps done more; he has done what Homer did, by hiding the un-

* I cannot quit this picture without observing, that it presents the most incontrovertible evidence of the incongruities arising from the jarring coalition of the grand and ornamental styles. The group of Lazarus may be said to contain the most valuable relic of the classic time of modern, and perhaps the only specimen left of Michelangelo's oil-painting; an opinion which will scarcely be disputed by him who has examined the manner of the Sistine Chapel, and in his mind compared it with the group of the Lazarus, and that with the style and treatment of the other parts. — Michelangelo should be sought rather in the *design* of the figure than in its *execution*, which he doubtless left to the more practised hand of Sebastiano. The original design by Michelangelo is now in the possession of the king of Holland at the Hague. — W.

manageable, but less essential part of his materials, he has transformed it to probability.

I have said, that by the choice of scenery alone we may often, if not always, judge how far an artist has penetrated his subject, what emotion in treating it he meant to excite. No subjects can elucidate this with so much perspicuity as those generally distinguished by the name of Madonnas, subjects stamped with a mystery of religion, and originally contrived under the bland images of maternal fondness to subdue the heart. In examining the considerable number of those by Raphael, we find generally some reciprocal feature of filial and parental love, "the charities of father, son, and mother," sometimes varied by infant play and female caresses, sometimes dignified by celestial ministry and homage; the endearments of the nursery selected and embodied by forms more charming than exalted, less beautiful than genial, — accordingly the choice of scenery consists seldom in more than a pleasing accompaniment. The flower and the shrub, the rivulet and grove, enamel the seat, or embower the repose of the sacred pilgrims, under the serenity of a placid sky, expanded, or breaking through trees, or sheltering ruins, whilst in those surrounded by domestic scenery, a warm recess veils the mother, now hiding her darling from profane aspect, now pressing him to her bosom, or contemplating in silent rapture his charms displayed on her lap — accompaniments and actions, though appropriate, without allusion to the mysterious personages they profess to exhibit — to discriminate them, the chair, the window, the saddle on which Joseph sits in one, the flowers which he kneeling presents in another, the cradle, the bath, are called on. Raphael was less penetrated by a devout, than by an amorous principle. His design was less to stamp maternal affection with the seal of religion, than to consecrate the face he adored; his Holy Families, with one exception, are the apotheosis of his Fornarina.*

This exception, as it proves what had been advanced of the rest, so it proves likewise that the omission of its beauties in them was more a matter of choice than want of com-

* This is one of the numerous instances to be found in Fuseli's Lectures, of the sacrifice of the strict adherence to fact to mere antithesis of expression, to a rhetorical flourish. — W.

prehension. Than the face and attitude of the Madonna of Versailles, known from a print by Edelinck, copied by Giac. Frey, nature and art combined never offered to the sense and heart a more exalted sentiment, or more correspondent forms. The face still, indeed, offers his favourite lines, lines not of supreme beauty, but they have assumed a sanctity which is in vain looked for in all its sister faces: serious without severity, pure without insipidity, humble though majestic, charming and modest at once, and, without affectation, graceful. Face and figure unite what we can conceive of maternal beauty, equally poised between effusion of affection and the mysterious sentiment of superiority in the awful Infant, whom she bends to receive from his slumbers.

The bland imagery of Raphael was exalted to a type of devotion by Michelangelo, and place and scenery are adjusted with allegoric or prophetic ornament. Thus, in the picture painted for Angelo Doni, where the enraptured mother receives the Infant from the hands of Joseph, the scene behind exhibits the new sacrament, in varied groups of Baptists, immersing themselves or issuing from the fount. In another, representing the Annunciation, we discover in the awful twilight of a recess, the figure of Moses breaking the tables he received on Sinai, an allusion to the abolition of the old law — an infringement of Jewish habits, for the figure is not an apparition, but a statue, readily forgiven to its allegoric beauty. Even in those subjects relating to Christ and his family, where the background is destitute of allusive ornament, it appears the seat of meditation or virgin purity, and consecrates the sentiment or action of the figures, as in the Salutation of San Giovanni in Laterano, and in that where Maria contemplates her son spread in her lap, and seems to bend under the presentiment of the terrible moment which shall spread him at her feet, under the cross; but in that monumental image of Jesus expired on the cross, with the Madonna and John on each side, what is the scenery but the echo of the subject? The surrounding element sympathizes with the woe of the sufferers in the two mourning genii emerging from the air — a sublime conception, which Vasari fancied to have successfully imitated, and perhaps improved, when, in a repetition of the same subject, he travestied them

to Phœbus and Diana extinguishing their orbs, as symbols of sun and moon eclipsed.*

What has been said of the luxuriance of Poussin's scenery, leads to that intemperate abuse which allots it a greater space, a more conspicuous situation, a higher finish and effect than the importance of the subject itself permits; by which unity is destroyed, and it becomes doubtful to what class a work belongs, whether it be a mixture of two or more, or all, where portrait with architecture, landscape with history, for "mastery striving, each rules a moment." It cannot be denied that some of the noblest works of art are liable to this imputation, and that the fond admiration of the detailed beauties in the scenery of the Pietro Martire of Titian, if it does not detract from the main purpose for which the picture was or ought to have been painted, certainly adds nothing to its real interest — nature finishes all, but an attempt to mimic nature's universality palsies the hand of art. The celelebrated "Cene," or Supper Scenes of Paolo Cagliari can escape this imputation only by being classed as models of ornamental painting; and were it not known, that notwithstanding their grandeur, propriety, and pathos of composition, the Cartoons of Raphael had been originally destined still more for popular amusement than the poised admiration of select judges†, it would be difficult to excuse or

* In a picture which he painted at Rome for Bindo Altoviti, it represented "Un Cristo quanto il vivo, levato di croce, e posto in terra a' piedi della Madre; e nell' aria Febo, che oscura la faccia del sole, e Diana quella della Luna. Nel paese poi, oscurato da queste Tenebre, si veggiono spezzarsi alcuni monti di pietra, mossi dal terremoto che fu nel patir del Salvatore e certi corpi morti di santi si veggiono risorgendo, uscire de' sepolcri in vari modi. Il quale quadro, finito che fu, per sua grazia non dispiacque al maggior pittore, scultore, ed architetto, che sia stato a' tempi nostri passat [1]" The compliment was not paid to Michelangelo himself, for the word "passati" tells that he was no more, but it levied a tribute on posterity.— *Vita di Giorgio Vasari.*

† There is no evidence of any such destiny of the cartoons; they were ordered by Leo X. for the express decoration of the presbyterium of the Sistine Chapel. See Platner and Bunsen, *Beschreibung der Stadt Rom.*, and the *Hand-Book of Painting*, Editor's Note, Part I. p. 315. — W.

[1] Vasari says *a' tempi nostri, e forse de' nostri passati*, which appears to mean — of our, or of past, times. — W.

to account for the exuberance, not seldom the impropriety of accompaniment and of scenery, with which some of them are loaded. In the cartoon of the Miraculous Draught of Fishes, perhaps Giovanni d'Udine would not have been allowed to treat us with fac-similes of the herons of the lake on its foreground; in that of Paul on the Areopagus, there would probably have been less agglomeration of finished, unfinished, or half-demolished buildings; in the Miracle of Peter and John, the principal agents would scarcely have been hemmed in by a barbaric colonnade, loaded with profane ornament *; or, in the Massacre of the Infants, the humble cottages of Bethlehem been transformed to piles of Ionian architecture, girt with gods in intercolumnar niches, and the metropolitan pomp of Rome.†

* This contrasts strongly with Richardson's feelings on this cartoon. — He says: "It is for the sake of this contrast, which is of so great consequence in painting, that this knowing man, in the cartoon we are now upon, hath placed his figures at one end of the Temple near the corner, where one would not suppose the beautiful gate was. But this varies the sides of the picture, and at the same time gives him an opportunity to enlarge his buildings with a fine portico, the like of which, you must imagine, must be on the other side of the main structure; all which together makes one of the noblest pieces of architecture that can be conceived.

"He hath departed from the historical truth in the pillars that are at the beautiful gate of the Temple. The imagery is by no means agreeable to the superstition of the Jews at that time, and all along after the captivity. Nor were those kinds of pillars known even in antique architecture, I believe, in any nation; but they are so nobly invented by Raphael, and so prodigiously magnificent, that it would have been a pity if he had not indulged himself in this piece of licentiousness, which undoubtedly he knew to be such."—*Essay on the Theory of Painting*, p. 49. The beauty, however, of these columns would not have suffered by the substitution of some other ornament for the figures, which are an extreme impropriety in a Jewish Temple. — W.

† There are three tapestries of the Massacre of the Innocents, but they all make but one design: Raphael's original drawing for this composition is now in the possession of Professor Posselger at Berlin. Passavant, *Rafuel von Urbino*, ii. 261. — W.

LECTURE V. — COMPOSITION. — EXPRESSION.

Elements of Composition; Grouping; Michelangelo; Correggio; Raphael; Breadth; — Expression; its Classes; its Limits.

INVENTION is followed by Composition. Composition, in its stricter sense, is the dresser of Invention; it superintends the disposition of its materials.

Composition has physical and moral elements: those are perspective and light, with shade; these, unity, propriety, and perspicuity. Without unity it cannot span its subject; without propriety it cannot tell the story; without perspicuity it clouds the fact with confusion; destitute of light and shade it misses the effect, and heedless of perspective it cannot find a place.

Composition, like all other parts of style, had a gradual progress; it began in monotony and apposition, emerged to centre and depth, established itself on harmony and masses, was debauched by contrast and by grouping, and finally supplanted by machinery, commonplace, and manner.

Of sculpture, as infant painting had borrowed its first theory of forms, so it probably borrowed its method of arranging them; and this is Apposition — a collateral arrangement of figures necessary for telling a single, or the scattered moments of, a fact. If statuary indulged in the combination of numerous groups, such as those of the Niobe, it might dispose them in composition, it might fix a centre and its rays, and so produce an illusion as far as colourless form is capable of giving it. But sculpture, when it was first consulted by painting, was not yet arrived at that period which allowed the display of such magnificence; a single figure, or a single group, could not sufficiently inform the painter: he was reduced to consult bassorilievo, and of that, apposition is the element.*

* This is again a passage, with many parallels in Fuseli's Lectures, which means little and can teach less. This peculiar introduction of the term Apposition is an unnecessary encumbrance of the subject. The whole passage is purely rhetorical, and is another specimen of Fuseli's love of antithesis. *Apposition*, addition or juxtaposition, cannot be the *element* of bassorilievo more than of painting; it differs from *composition* simply in its degree, and is comprised in composition. The idea, also, of Painting borrowing from Bassorilievo is fanciful. The bassorilievo is itself a *drawing* before it is a bassorilievo; and the coloured

And in this light we ought to contemplate a great part of the Cappella Sistina. Its plan was monumental, and some of its compartments were allotted to apposition, not because Michelangelo was a sculptor, but because it was a more comprehensive medium to exhibit his general plan than the narrower scale of composition. He admitted and like a master treated composition, whenever his subject from the primeval simplicity of elemental nature retreated within the closer bounds of society. His patriarchs, his prophets, and his sibyls, singly considered or as groups ; the scenery of the Brazen Serpent, of David, and of Judith ; of Noah and his Sons, are models of the roundest and grandest composition. What principle of composition do we miss in the creation of Adam and Eve? Can it grasp with more unity, characterise with more propriety, present with brighter perspicuity, give greater truth of place, or round with more effect? If collateral arrangement be the ruling plan of the Last Judgment, if point of sight and linear and aerial perspective in what is elevated comes forward or recedes, if artificial masses and ostentatious roundness, on the whole, be absorbed by design or sacrificed to higher principles, what effects has the greatest power of machinery ever contrived to emulate the conglobation of those struggling groups where light and shade administered to terror or sublimity? What, to emulate the boat of Charon disemboguing its crew of criminals, flung in a murky mass of shade across the pallid concave and bleak blast of light that blows it on us? A meteor in the realms of chiaroscuro, which obscures whatever the most daring servants of that power elsewhere produced.

If the plan of Michelangelo must be estimated by other principles, his process must be settled by other rules than the plan and process of Correggio at Parma. Though the first and greatest, Corregio was no more than a machinist. It was less the Assumption of the Virgin, less a monument of triumphant Religion he meditated to exhibit by sublimity of conception or characteristic composition, than by the ultimate powers of linear and aerial perspective at an elevation which demanded eccentric and violent foreshortening, set off and tuned by magic light and shade, to embody the medium in which the actors were to move; and to the splendour and

bassirilievi of the Egyptians are much more *engraved pictures* than *painted sculptures* — their forms were engraved for the sake of durability. — W.

MAGDALEN COLL OF LITTUR

loftiness of that he accommodated the subject and subordinated the agents. Hence his work, though moving in a flood of harmony, is not legitimate composition. The synod that surrounds the glory, the glory itself that embosoms the Virgin and her angelic choir, Christ who precipitates himself to meet the glory, are equally absorbed in the *bravura* of the vehicle — they radiate, reflect, and mass, but show us little more than limbs. This makes the cupola of Correggio less epic or dramatic than ornamental. The technic part of composition alone, though carried to the highest pitch of perfection, if its ostentation absorb the subject, stamps inferiority on the master. Take away Homer's language, and you take much, but you leave the epic poet unimpaired; take it from Virgil, strip him of the majesty, the glow, the propriety of his diction, and the remainder of his claim to epic poetry will nearly be reduced to what he borrowed from Homer's plan. What is it we remember when we leave the cupolas of Correggio? what when we leave the Chapel of Sixtus? There, a man who transferred to a colossal scale the dictates of his draped or naked model, applied them with a comprehensive eye, and set them off by magic light and shade, and wide-expanded harmony of tone; here an epic plan combined and told in simple modes of grandeur. Each man gave what he had: Correggio, limbs and effect; Michelangelo, being, form, and meaning. If the cupola of Correggio be in its kind unequalled by earlier or succeeding plans, if it leave far behind the effusions of Lanfranco and Pietro da Cortona, it was not the less their model; the ornamental style of machinists dates not the less its origin from him.

Various are the shapes in which Composition embodies its subject, and presents it to our eye. The cone or pyramid, the globe, the grape, flame and stream, the circle and its segments, lend their figure to elevate, concentrate, round, diffuse themselves, or undulate in its masses. It towers in the Apollo, it darts its flame forward in the warrior of Agasias, its lambent spires wind upward with the Laocoon; it inverts the cone in the Hercules of Glycon, it doubles it or undulates in Venus and the Graces. In the bland central light of a globe imperceptibly gliding through lucid demi-tints into rich reflected shades, it composes the spell of Correggio, and entrances like a delicious dream; whilst, like a torrent, it rushes from the hand of Tintoretto over the trembling canvas

in enormous wings of light and shade, and sweeps all individual importance into general effects. But whether its groups be embrowned on a lucid sky, or emerge from darkness, whether it break, like a meridian sun, on the reflected object with Rubens, or, from Rembrandt, flash on it in lightning; whatever be its form or its effect, if it be more or less than what it ought to be — a vehicle; if it branch not out of the subject as the produce of its root; if it do not contain all that distinguishes it from other subjects; if it leave out aught that is characteristic and exclusively its own, and admit what is superfluous or commonplace — it is no longer composition, it is grouping only, an ostentatious or useless scaffolding about an edifice without a base; such was not the composition of Raphael.

The leading principle of Raphael's composition is that simple air, that artlessness which persuades us that his figures have been less composed by skill than grouped by nature; that the fact must have happened as we see it represented. Simplicity taught him to grasp his subject, propriety to give it character and form, and perspicuity to give it breadth and place. The School of Athens, in the Vatican; the Death of Ananias, and the Sacrifice at Lystra, among the Cartoons, may serve as instances.

A metaphysical composition *, if it be numerous, will be oftener mistaken for dilapidation of fragments than regular distribution of materials. The School of Athens communicates a few more than an arbitrary assemblage of speculative groups. Yet if the subject be the dramatic representation of philosophy, as it prepares for active life, the parts of the building are not connected with more regular gradations than those groups. Archimedes and Pythagoras, Plato and Socrates, Aristotle and Democritus, Epictetus, Diogenes, and Aristippus, in different degrees of characteristic modes, tell one great doctrine, that, fitted by physical and intellectual harmony, man ascends from himself to society, from society to God. For this, group balances group, action is contrasted by repose, each weight has its counterpoise; unity and variety shed harmony over the whole.

In the cartoon of Ananias, at the first glance, and even before we are made acquainted with the particulars of the

* By which Fuseli, probably, means a composition designed to illustrate some metaphysical subject. — W.

sub'ect, we become partners of the scene. The disposition is amphitheatric, the scenery a spacious hall, the heart of the action is the centre, the wings assist, elucidate, connect it with the ends. The apoplectic man before us is evidently the victim of a supernatural power, inspiring the apostolic figures who, on the raised platform, with threatening arm pronounced, and with the word enforced, his doom. The terror occasioned by the sudden stroke is best expressed by the features of youth and middle age on each side of the sufferer; it is instantaneous, because its shock has not yet spread beyond them, a contrivance not to interrupt the dignity due to the sacred scene, and to stamp the character of devout attention on the assembly. What preceded and what followed is equally implied in their occupation, and in the figure of a matron entering and absorbed in counting money, though she approaches the fatal centre, and whom we may suppose to be Sapphira, the accomplice and the wife of Ananias, and the devoted partner of his fate. In this composition of near thirty figures, none can be pointed out as a figure of commonplace or mere convenience; legitimate offsprings of one subject, they are linked to each other and to the centre by one common chain; all act and all have room to act; repose alternates with energy.

The Sacrifice at Lystra, though as a whole it has more of collateral arrangement than depth of composition, as it traces in the moment of its choice the motive that produced and shows the disappointment that checks it, has collected actors and faces the most suitable to express both: actors and features of godlike dignity, superstitious devotion and eager curiosity: the scene is the vestibule of the temple of Hermes, and Paul, the supposed representative of that deity, though not placed in the centre or a central light, by his elevation, gesture, and the whole of the composition streaming toward him, commands the first glance. At the very onset of the ceremony the sacrificer is arrested in the act of smiting the victim, by the outstretched arm of a young man bursting through the hymning throng of priests and victimarii, observing Paul indignant rending his garment in horror of the idolatrous perversion of his miracle.* The miracle itself is

* A miracle means an act performed by virtue of an unknown law of nature.—Or rather an act which cannot be explained by any of the *known* laws of nature. — W.

personified in that characteristic figure of the healed man, who, with eyes flashing joy and gratitude on the Apostle, and hands joined in adoration, rushes in, accompanied by an aged man of gravity and rank, who, lifting up part of the garment that covered his thigh, attests him to have been the identic owner of those crutches that formerly supported him, though now as useless thrown on the pavement.*

Among the Cartoons which we do not possess, and probably exist only in the tapestries of Rome and Madrid, and engravings copied from them, the Resurrection of Christ and his Ascension, equally mark Raphael's discriminative powers in their contrasted compositions.† The Resurrection derives its interest from the convulsive rapidity, the Ascension from its calmness of motion. In that, the hero like a ball of fire shoots up from the bursting tomb and sinking cerements, and scatters astonishment and dismay. What apprehension dared not to suspect, what fancy could not dream of, no eye had ever beheld and no tongue ever uttered, blazes before us: the passions dart in rays resistless from the centre. Fear, terror, conviction, wrestle with dignity and courage in the centurion; convulse brutality, overwhelm violence, enervate resistance, absorb incredulity in the guard. The whole is tempestuous. The Ascension is the majestic last of many similar scenes: no longer with the rapidity of a conqueror, but with the calm serenity of triumphant power, the hero is borne up in splendour, and gradually vanishes from those who by repeated visions had been taught to expect whatever was amazing. Silent and composed, with eyes more absorbed in adoration than wonder, they follow the glorious emanation, till, addressed by the white-robed messengers of their departed king, they relapse to the feelings of men.

We have considered hitherto the mental part of Raphael's composition, let us say a word of the technic. His excellence in this is breadth of masses, and of positive light and shade.

Breadth, or that quality of execution which makes a whole

* Compare Richardson, *Essay, &c.*, p. 56. —W.

† These compositions belong to the Arazzi della Scuola Nuova. There is a print of the Resurrection by R. Dalton, and of the Ascension by A. Marelli. Both series are engraved in Landon's *Vies et Œuvres des Peintres, &c.* — W.

so predominate over the parts as to excite the idea of uninterrupted unity amid the greatest variety, modern art, as it appears to me, owes to Michelangelo. The breadth of Michelangelo resembles the tide and ebb of a mighty sea: waves approach, arrive, retreat, but in their rise and fall, emerging or absorbing, impress us only with the image of the power that raises, that directs them; whilst the discrepance of obtruding parts in the works of the infant Florentine, Venetian, and German schools, distracts our eye like the numberless breakers of a shallow river, or as the brambles and creepers that entangle the paths of a wood, and instead of showing us our road, perplex us only with themselves. By breadth the artist puts us into immediate possession of the whole, and from that gently leads us to the examination of the parts according to their relative importance: hence it follows, that in a representation of organised surfaces, breadth is the judicious display of fulness, not a substitute of vacuity. Breadth might be easily obtained if emptiness could give it. Yet even in that degraded state, if gratification of the eye be a first indispensable duty of an art that can impress us only by that organ, it is preferable to the laboured display of parts ambitiously thronging for admittance at the expense of the whole; to that perplexed diligence which wearies us with impediment before we can penetrate a meaning or arrive at the subject, whose clear idea must be first obtained before we can judge of the propriety or impropriety of parts. The principle which constitutes the breadth of Raphael was neither so absolute nor so comprehensive as that of Michelangelo's. But his perspicacity soon discovered that great, uninterrupted masses of light and shade bespeak, satisfy, conduct, and give repose to the eye; that opposition of light and shade gives perspicuity. Convinced of this, he let their mass fall as broad on his figures as their importance, attitude, and relation to each other permitted, and as seldom as possible interrupted it. Masses of shade he opposed to light, and lucid ones to shade. The strict observation of this rule appears to be the cause why every figure of Raphael, however small, even at a considerable distance, describes itself, and strikes the eye with distinctness; so that even the comparatively diminutive figures of his Loggie are easily discriminated from the Cortile below To this maxim he

remained faithful in all his works, a few instances excepted, when instead of light and shade he separated figures by reflexes of a different colour; exceptions more dictated by necessity than choice, and which serve rather to confirm than to impair the rule.

It cannot be denied that, if this positive opposition gave superior distinctness, it occasioned sometimes abruptness. Each part is broad, but separation is too visible. Reflexes he uniformly neglects, and, from whatever cause, is often inattentive to transition; he does not sufficiently connect with breadth of demi-tint the two extremes of his masses; and, though much less in fresco than in oil, seems not always to have had a distinct idea of the gradations required completely to round as well as to spread a whole; to have been more anxious to obtain breadth itself than its elemental harmony.

It does not appear that the great masters of legitimate composition in the sixteenth century attended to or understood the advantages which elevation of sight and a low horizon are capable of giving to a subject. They place us in the gallery to behold their scenes; but, from want of keeping, the horizontal line becomes a perpendicular, and drops the distance on the foreground; the more remote groups do not approach, but fall or stand upon the foremost actors. As this impedes the principles of unity and grandeur in numerous compositions, so it impairs each individual form; which, to be grand, ought to rise upward in moderate foreshortening, command the horizon, or be in contact with the sky. Reverse this plan in the composition of Pietro Martyre by Titian, let the horizontal line be raised above the friar on the foreground; space, loftiness, and unity vanish together. What gives sublimity to Rembrandt's Ecce Homo * more than this principle? — a composition, which though complete, hides in its grandeur the limits of its scenery. Its form is as a pyramid whose top is lost in the sky, as its base in tumultuous murky waves. From the fluctuating crowds who inundate the base of the tribunal, we rise to Pilate, surrounded and perplexed by the varied ferocity of the san-

* Rembrandt painted several Ecce Homos, and etched two designs of this description: his principal picture of the subject is in the Geistkirche at Magdeburg. — W.

guinary synod, to whose remorseless gripe he surrenders his wand; and from him we ascend to the sublime resignation of innocence in Christ, and regardless of the roar below, securely repose on his countenance. Such is the grandeur of a conception, which in its blaze absorbs the abominable detail of materials too vulgar to be mentioned. Had the materials been equal to the conception and composition, the Ecce Homo of Rembrandt, even unsupported by the magic of its light and shade, or his spell of colours, would have been an assemblage of superhuman powers.

Far, too far, from having answered all the demands of composition, my limits force me, and my subject requires, to give a faint sketch of the most prominent features of Expression, its assistant and interpreter. They interweave themselves so closely with each other, and both with Invention, that we can scarcely conceive one without supposing the presence of the rest, and applying the principles of each to all; still they are separate powers, and may be possessed singly. The figure of Christ by Michelangelo in the Minerva, embracing his cross and the instruments of suffering, is sublimely conceived, powerfully arranged; but neither his features nor expression are those of Christ.

Expression is the vivid image of the passion that affects the mind; its language, and the portrait of its situation. It animates the features, attitudes, and gestures which Invention selected, and Composition arranged; its principles, like theirs, are simplicity, propriety, and energy.

It is important to distinguish the materials and the spirit of expression. To give this we must be masters of the forms and of the hues that embody it. Without truth of line no true expression is possible; and the passions, whose inward energy stamped form on feature, equally reside, fluctuate, flash, or lower on it in colour, and give it energy by light and shade.

To make a face speak clearly and with propriety, it must not only be well constructed, but have its own exclusive character. Though the element of the passions be the same in all, they neither speak in all with equal energy, nor are circumscribed by equal limits. Though joy be joy, and anger anger, the joy of the sanguine is not that of the phlegmatic, nor the anger of the melancholy that of the fiery cha-

racter; and the discriminations established by complexion are equally conspicuous in those of climate, habit, education, and rank. Expression has its classes. Decebalus and Syphax, though both determined to die, meet death with eye as different as hues. The tremulous emotion of Hector's breast when he approaches Ajax is not the palpitation of Paris when he discovers Menelaus; the frown of the Hercynian Phantom may repress the ardour, but cannot subdue the dignity of Drusus; the fear of Marius cannot sink to the panic of the Cimber, who drops the dagger at entering his prison, nor the astonishment of Hamlet degenerate into the fright of vulgar fear.

Le Sueur was not aware of this when he painted his Alexander. Perhaps no picture is, in spite of common sense, oftener quoted for its expression than Alexander sick on his bed, with the cup at his lips, observing the calumniated physician. The manner in which he is represented is as inconsistent with the story as injurious to the character of the Macedonian hero. The Alexander of Le Sueur has the prying look of a spy. He who was capable of that look would no more have ventured on quaffing a single drop of the suspected medicine than on the conquest of the Persian empire. If Alexander, when he drank the cup, had not the most positive faith in the incorruptibility of Philippus, he was more than an idiot, he was a felon against himself and a traitor to his army, whose safety depended on the success of the experiment. His expression ought to be open and unconcerned confidence — as that of his physician, a contemptuous smile, or curiosity suspended by indignation, or the indifference of a mind conscious of innocence, and fully relying on its being known to his friend. Le Sueur, instead of these, has given him little more than a stupid stare and vulgar form.

The emanations of the passions, which pathognomy has reduced to the four principal sources of *calm emotion, joy, grief simple, or with pain* and *terror*, may be divided into internal and external ones: those hint their action only, they influence a feature or some extremity: these extend their sway over the whole frame — they animate, agitate, depress, convulse, absorb form. The systematic designers of pathognomy have given their element, their extremes, the mask; the ancients have established their technic standard, and

their degrees of admissibility in art. The Apollo is animated; the Warrior of Agasias is agitated; the dying Gladiator or herald suffers in depression; the Laocoon is convulsed; the Niobe is aborbed. The greater the mental vigour, dignity, or habitual self-command of a person, the less perceptible to superficial observation or vulgar eyes will be the emotion of his mind. The greater the predominance of fancy over intellect, the more ungovernable the conceits of self-importance, so much the more will passion partake of outward and less dignified energy. The Jupiter of Homer manifests his will and power by the mere contraction of his eyebrows; Socrates in the School of Athens only moves his finger, and Ovid in the Parnassus only lays it over his lips, and both say enough; but Achilles throws himself headlong, and is prevented from slaying himself by the grasp of his friend. Only then, when passion or suffering become too big for utterance, the wisdom of ancient art has borrowed a feature from tranquillity, though not its air. For every being seized by an enormous passion, be it joy or grief, or fear sunk to despair, loses the character of its own individual expression, and is absorbed by the power of the feature that attracts it. Niobe and her family are assimilated by extreme anguish; Ugolino is petrified by the fate that swept the stripling at his foot, and sweeps in pangs the rest. The metamorphoses of ancient mythology are founded on this principle, are allegoric. Clytia, Biblis, Salmacis, Narcissus, tell only the resistless power of sympathetic attraction.

Similar principles award to Raphael the palm of expression among the moderns: driven to extremes after his demise by Julio Romano and a long interval of languor, it seemed to revive in Domenichino; I say seemed, for his sensibility was not supported by equal comprehension, elevation of mind, or dignity of motion; his sentiment wants propriety, he is a mannerist in feeling, and tacks the imagery of Theocritus to the subjects of Homer. A detail of pretty though amiable conceptions, is rather calculated to diminish than to enforce the energy of a pathetic whole: a lovely child taking refuge in the lap or bosom of a lovely mother is an idea of nature, and pleasing in a lowly, pastoral, or domestic subject; but, perpetually recurring, becomes commonplace, and amid the terrors of martyrdom is a shred sewed to a purple robe. In

touching the characteristic circle that surrounds the Ananias of Raphael, you touch the electric chain, a genuine spark irresistibly darts from the last as from the first, penetrates, subdues; at the Martyrdom of St. Agnes by Domenichino, you saunter among the adventitious mob of a lane, where the silly chat of neighbouring gossips announces a topic as silly, till you find with indignation, that instead of a broken pot or a petty theft, you are to witness a scene for which heaven opens, the angels descend, and Jesus rises from his throne.

It is, however, but justice to observe, that there is a subject in which Domenichino has not unsuccessfully wrestled, and, in my opinion, even excelled Raphael; I mean the demoniac boy among the series of frescoes at Grotta Ferrata*: that inspired figure is evidently the organ of an internal, superior, preternatural agent, darted upward without contortion, and considered as unconnected with the story, never to be confounded with a merely tumultuary distorted maniac, which is not perhaps the case of the boy in the Transfiguration; the subject too being within the range of Domenichino's powers, domestic, the whole of the persons introduced is characteristic: awe, with reliance on the Saint who operates the miracle or cure, and terror at the redoubled fury of his son, mark the rustic father; nor could the agonising female with the infant in her arm, as she is the mother, be exchanged to advantage, and with propriety; (she) occupies that place which the fondling females in the pictures of St. Sebastian, St. Andrew, and St. Agnes only usurp.

The Martyrdom, or rather the brutally ostentatious murder of St. Agnes leads us to the *limits* of expression: sympathy and disgust are the irreconcileable parallels that must for ever separate legitimate terror and pity, from horror and aversion. We cannot sympathise with what we detest or despise, nor fully pity what we shudder at or loathe. So little were these limits understood by the moderns, Michelangelo excepted, that even the humanity and delicacy of Raphael did not guard him from excursions into the realms of horror and loathsomeness: it is difficult to conceive what could provoke him to make a finished design of the

* In the chapel of San Nilo at Grotta Ferrata near Frascati. — W.

inhumanities that accompany the martyrdom of St. Felicitas, at which even description shudders; a design made on purpose to be dispersed over Europe, perpetuated and made known to all by the graver of Marc Antonio: was it to prove to Albert Dürer and the Germans of his time that they had not exhausted the sources of abomination? He made an equal mistake in the Morbetto, where, though not with so lavish a hand as Poussin after him, instead of the moral effects of the plague, he has personified the effluvia of putrefaction. What *he* had not penetration to avoid, could not be expected to be shunned by his scholars. Julio Romano delighted in studied images of torture, as well as of the most abandoned licentiousness. Among his contemporaries, Correggio even attempted to give a zest to the most wanton cruelty by an affectation of grace in the picture of the Saints Placido and Flavia; but the enamoured trance of Placido with his neck half cut, and the anthem that quivers on the lips of Flavia whilst a sword is entering her side, in vain bespeak our sympathy, for whilst we detest the felons who slaughter them, we loathe to inspect the actual process of the crime; mangling is contagious, and spreads aversion from the slaughterman to the victim. If St. Bartholomew and St. Erasmus are subjects for painting they can only be so before, and neither under nor after the operation of the knife or windlass. A decollated martyr represented with his head in his hand, as Rubens did, and a headless corpse with the head lying by it, as Correggio, can only prove the brutality, stupidity, or bigotry of the employer, and the callus or venality of the artist.

The gradations of expression within, close to, and beyond its limits cannot perhaps be elucidated with greater perspicuity than by comparison; and the different moments which Julio Romano, Vandyck, and Rembrandt have selected to represent the subject of Samson betrayed by Delilah, offers one of the fairest specimens furnished by art. Considering it as a drama, we may say that Julio forms the plot, Vandyck unravels it, and Rembrandt shows the extreme of the catastrophe.

In the composition of Julio, Samson, satiated with pleasure, plunged into sleep, and stretched on the ground, rests his head and presses with his arm the thigh of Delilah on

one side, whilst on the other a nimble minion busily, but with timorous caution, fingers and clips his locks; such is his fear, that, to be firm, he rests one knee on a footstool tremblingly watching the sleeper, and ready to escape at his least motion. Delilah, seated between both, fixed by the weight of Samson, warily turns her head toward a troop of warriors in the back-ground, with the left arm stretched out she beckons their leader, with the finger of the right hand she presses her lip to enjoin silence and noiseless approach. The Herculean make and lion port of Samson, his perturbed though ponderous sleep, the quivering agility of the curled favourite employed, the harlot graces and meretricious elegance contrasted by equal firmness and sense of danger in Delilah, the attitude and look of the grim veteran who heads the ambush, whilst they give us the clue to all that followed, keep us in anxious suspense — we palpitate in breathless expectation: this is the plot.

The terrors which Julio made us forebode, Vandyck summons to our eyes.* The mysterious lock is cut; the dreaded victim is roused from the lap of the harlot-priestess. Starting unconscious of his departed power, he attempts to spring forward, and with one effort of his mighty breast and expanded arms, to dash his foes to the ground and fling the alarmed traitress from him — in vain; shorn of his strength he is borne down by the weight of the mailed chief that throws himself upon him, and overpowered by a throng of infuriate satellites. But though overpowered, less aghast than indignant, his eye flashes reproach on the perfidious female whose wheedling caresses drew the fatal secret from his breast: the plot is unfolded, and what succeeds, too horrible for the sense, is left to fancy to brood upon, or drop it.

This moment of horror the gigantic but barbarous genius of Rembrandt chose, and, without a metaphor, *executed* a subject, which humanity, judgment, and taste taught his rivals only to *treat:* he displays a scene which no eye but that of Domitian or Nero could wish or bear to see. Samson, stretched on the ground, is held by one Philistine under him, whilst another chains his right arm, and a third clench-

* This picture is now in the Pinacothek at Munich. There is a copy of it at Hampton Court. — W.

ing his beard with one, drives a dagger into his eye with the other hand. The pain that blasts him, darts expression from the contortions of the mouth and his gnashing teeth to the crampy convulsions of the leg dashed high into the air. Some fiend-like features glare through the gloomy light which discovers Delilah, her work now done, sliding off, the shears in her left, the locks of Samson in her right hand. If her figure, elegant, attractive, such as Rembrandt never conceived before or after, deserve our wonder rather than our praise, no words can do justice to the expression that animates her face, and shows her less shrinking from the horrid scene than exulting in being its cause. Such is the work whose magic of colour, tone, and chiaroscuro irresistibly entrap the eye, whilst we detest the brutal choice of the moment.*

Let us, in conclusion, contrast the stern pathos of this scenery with the placid emotions of a milder subject, in the celebrated pictures which represent the Communion or death of St. Jerome by Agostino Carracci and his scholar Domenichino—that an altar-piece in the Certosa near Bologna, this in the Church of San Girolamo della Carità at Rome†; but for some time both exhibited in the gallery of the Louvre at Paris. What I have to say on the invention, expression, characters, tone, and colour of either is the result of observations lately made on both in that gallery, where then they were placed nearly opposite to each other.

In each picture, St. Jerome, brought from his cell to receive the sacrament, is represented on his knees, supported by devout attendants; in each the officiating priest is in the act of administering to the dying saint; the same clerical

* The form, but not the soul, of Julio's composition has been borrowed by Rubens, or the master of the well-known picture in the gallery of Dulwich college. Few can be unacquainted with the work of Vandyck, spread by the best engravers of that school. The picture of Rembrandt is the chief ornament of the collection in the garden house of the Schönborn family, in one of the suburbs of Vienna: has been etched on a large scale, and there is a copy of it in the gallery at Cassel. A circumstantial account of it may be found in the Eighth Letter, vol. iii. of Kütner's Travels.

† Now in the gallery of the Vatican, and hanging opposite to the Transfiguration by Raphael. — W.

society fills the portico of the temple in both; in both the scene is witnessed from above by infant angels.

The general opinion is in favour of the pupil, but if in the economy of the whole Domenichino surpasses his master, he appears to me greatly inferior both in the character and expression of the hero. Domenichino has represented Piety scarcely struggling with decay, Agostino triumphant over it: his saint becomes in the place where he is, a superior being, and is inspired by the approaching god; that of Domenichino seems divided between resignation, mental and bodily imbecility, and desire. The saint of Agostino is a lion, that of Domenichino a lamb.

In the sacerdotal figure, administering the viaticum, Domenichino has less improved than corrected the unworthy choice of his master. The priest of Agostino is one of the Frati Godenti of Dante, before they received the infernal hood; a gross, fat, self-conceited terrestrial feature, a countenance equally proof to elevation, pity, or thought. The priest of Domenichino is a minister of grace, stamped with the sacred humility that characterised his master, and penetrated by the function of which he is the instrument.

We are more impressed with the graces of youth than the energies of manhood verging on age: in this respect, as well as that of contrast with the decrepitude of St. Jerome, the placid contemplative beauty of the young deacon on the foreground of Domenichino, will probably please more than the poetic trance of the assistant friar with the lighted taper in the foreground of Agostino. This must however be observed, that as Domenichino thought proper to introduce supernatural witnesses of the ceremony in imitation of his master, their effect seems less ornamental, and more interwoven with the plan, by being perceived by the actors themselves.

If the attendant characters in the picture of Agostino are more numerous, and have on the whole, furnished the hints of admission to those of Domenichino, this, with one exception, may be said to have used more propriety and judgment in the choice. Both have introduced a man with a turban, and opened a portico to characterise an Asiatic scene.

With regard to composition, Domenichino undoubtedly

gains the palm. The disposition on the whole he owes to his master, though he reversed it, but he has cleared it of that oppressive bustle which rather involves and crowds the principal actors in Agostino than attends them. He spreads tranquillity with space, and repose without vacuity.

With this corresponds the tone of the whole. The evening-freshness of an oriental day tinges every part; the medium of Agostino partakes too much of the fumigated inside of a Catholic chapel.

The draperies of both are characteristic, and unite subordination with dignity, but their colour is chosen with more judgment by Domenichino; the imbrowned gold and ample folds of the robe of the administering priest are more genial than the cold blue, white and yellow on the priest of his master; in both, perhaps, the white draperies on the foreground figures have too little strength for the central colours, but it is more perceived in Carracci than in Domenichino.

The forms of the saint in Carracci are grander and more ideal than in the saint of Domenichino; some have even thought them too vigorous: both, in my opinion, are in harmony with the emotion of the face and expression of either. The eagerness that animates the countenance of the one may be supposed to spread a momentary vigour over his frame. The mental dereliction of countenance in the other with equal propriety relaxes and palsies the limbs which depend on it.

The colour of Carracci's saint is much more characteristic of fleshy though nearly bloodless substance than that chosen by his rival, which is withered, shrivelled, leathery in the lights, and earthy in the shades; but the head of the officiating priest in Domenichino, whether considered as a specimen of colour independent of the rest, or as set off by it, for truth, tone, freshness, energy, is not only the best Domenichino ever painted, but perhaps the best that can be conceived.

Lecture VI. — Chiaroscuro.

Definition. — Leonardo da Vinci. — Giorgione. — Antonio da Correggio.

The term *Chiaroscuro*, adopted from the Italian, in its primary and simplest sense means the division of a single object into light and shade, and in its widest compass comprises their distribution over a whole composition: whether the first derive its splendour by being exposed to a direct light, or from colours in their nature luminous; and whether the second owe their obscurity directly to the privation of light, or be produced by colours in themselves opaque. Its exclusive power is, to give substance to form, place to figure, and to create space. It may be considered as legitimate, or spurious: it is legitimate when, as the immediate offspring of the subject, its disposition, extent, strength or sweetness are subservient to form, expression, and invigorate or illustrate character, by heightening the primary actor or actors, and subordinating the secondary; it is spurious when from an assistant aspiring to the rights of a principal, it becomes a substitute for indispensable or more essential demands. As such, it has often been employed by the machinists of different schools, for whom it became the refuge of ignorance, a palliative for an incurable disease, and the asylum of emptiness; still, as even a resource of this kind proves a certain vigour of mind, it surprises into something like unwilling admiration and forced applause.

Of every subject Unity is the soul: unity, of course, is inseparable from legitimate chiaroscuro: hence the individual light and shade of every figure that makes part of a given or chosen subject, whether natural or ideal, as well as the more compound one of the different intermediate groups, must act as so many rays emanating from one centre, and terminate, blazing, evanescent, or obscured, in rounding it to the eye.

Truth is the next requisite of chiaroscuro, whatever be the subject. Some it attends without ambition, content with common effects; some it invigorates or inspires: but in either case, let the effect be that of usual expanded day-light, or

artificial and condensed, it ought to be regulated by truth in extent, strength, brilliancy, softness, and, above all, by simplicity in its positive and purity in its negative parts. As shade is the mere absence of light, it cannot, except from reflexes, possess any hue or colour of its own, and acquires all its charms from transparency.

But to the rules which art prescribes to chiaroscuro, to round each figure of a composition with truth, to connect it with the neighbouring groups, and both with the whole — it adds, that all this should be done with strict adherence to propriety, at the least possible expense of the subordinate parts, and with the utmost attainable degree of effect and harmony — demands which it is not my duty to inquire, whether they entered ever with equal evidence the mind of any one artist, ancient or modern: whether, if it be granted possible that they did, they were ever balanced with equal impartiality; and grant this, whether they ever were or could be executed with equal felicity. A character of equal universal power is not a human character — and the nearest approach to perfection can only be in carrying to excellence one great quality with the least alloy of defects. Thus in the School of Athens, Raphael's great aim being to embody on the same scene the gradations, varieties, and utmost point of human culture, *as it proceeds from the individual to society, and from that ascends to God;* he suffered expression and character to preponderate over effect and combination of masses, and contriving to unite the opposite wings with the centre by entrance and exit at each extremity, as far as expression could do it, succeeded to make, what in itself is little more than apposition of single figures or detached groups, one grand whole. I say, as far as expression could satisfy a mind qualified to contemplate and penetrate his principle, however unsatisfied a merely picturesque eye might wander over a scattered assemblage of figures equally illuminated and unconnected by a commanding mass of light and shade.

From this deficiency of effect in the composition we speak of, it is evident that mere natural light and shade, however separately or individually true, is not always legitimate chiaroscuro in art. Nature sheds or withholds her ray indiscriminately, and every object has what share it can obtain

by place and position, which it is the business of art to arrange by fixing a centre and distributing the rays according to the more or less important claims of the subject: as long as it regulates itself by strict observance of that principle, it matters not whether its principal mass radiate from the middle, wind in undulating shapes, dart in decided beams from the extremities; emanate from one source, or borrow additional effect from subordinate ones: let it mount like flame or descend in lightning; dash in stern tones terror on the eye, emergent from a dark or luminous medium; through twilight immerse itself in impenetrable gloom, or gradually vanish in voluptuous repose; guided by the subject the most daring division of light and shade becomes natural and legitimate, and the most regular, spurious and illegitimate without it.

To attain in the execution the highest possible and widest expanded effect of light, with equal depth and transparence in the shade, brilliancy of colour is less required than unison: a sovereign tone must pervade the whole, which, though arbitrary and dependent on choice, decides all subordinate ones, as the tone of the first instrument in a regular concert tunes all the rest; their effect entirely depends on being in unison with it, and discord is produced whenever they revolt: by thus uniting itself with the whole, the simplest tone well managed may become, not only harmonious, but rich and splendid, it is then the tone of nature; whilst the most brilliant one, if contradicted or disappointed by the detail of the inferior, may become heavy, leathern, and discordant.

Though every work of Correggio is an illustration of this principle, and none with brighter evidence than his "Notte," in which the central light of the infant irradiates the whole; perhaps the most decisive, because the most appropriate proof of it is in its companion, the less known picture of St. Sebastian, at Dresden, in which the central light of a glory not only surprises the eye with all the splendour of a sun, though its colour is a yellow comparatively faint, and terminates in brown, but tinges the whole, perfectly transparent, with its emanation.

That not before the lapse of two hundred years after the resurrection of Art, the discovery of chiaroscuro, as a principle of beauty in single figures and of effect in composition,

should be awarded to Leonardo da Vinci, a patriarch of that school which time has shown of all others the least inclined to appreciate its advantages, is at once a proof of the singularity that marks the local distribution of powers, and of the inconceivable slowness which attends human perception in the progress of study; but without generally admitting what has been said with more energy than judgment or regard to truth, that modern art literally sprang from the loins of Leonardo, it must be granted that no work anterior or contemporary with his essays in chiaroscuro now exists to disprove his claim to the first vision of its harmony; its magic lent the charm, by which his females allure, to forms neither ideal nor much varied; sisters of one family, they attract by the light in which they radiate, by the shade that veils them — for the features of Giotto's or Memmi's Madonnas or virgin-saints floating in the same medium, would require little more to be their equals.*

This principle Leonardo seems seldom if ever to have extended to relieve or recommend his larger compositions and male figures, if we except the group of contending horsemen which made or was intended for some part of his rival Cartoon in the Sala del Consiglio; a knot of supreme powers in composition and chiaroscuro: though, as we know it chiefly from a copy of P. P. Rubens engraved by Edelinck, the gross evidence of Flemish liberties taken with the style, makes it probable that the original simplicity of light and shade has been invigorated by the artificial contrasts of the copyist.† Leonardo's open scenery, tinged with the glareless evenness of plain daylight, seldom warrants effects so concentrated. Unostentatious gravity marks the characters of his Last Supper, and sober evening tones marked probably the chiaroscuro of the groups and scenery, if we may be allowed to form our judgment from the little that remains unimpaired by the ravages of time and the more barbarous ones of renovators.‡

* Fra Filippo Lippi was perhaps the greatest master of light and shade previous to Leonardo da Vinci; but he was not so great a master of chiaroscuro as to dispute the validity of Leonardo's title as the first to completely develop its powers. — W.

† It is engraved also in Lastri's *Etruria Pittrice*. — W.

‡ See Barry's Third Lecture. — W.

To the discovery of central radiance the genius of Leonardo with equal penetration added its counterpart, *purity* of shade and the coalescence of both through imperceptible demi-tints. Whatever tone of light he chose, he never forgot that the shade intended to set it off was only its absence, and not a positive colour, and that both were to be harmonised by demi-tints composed of both; a principle of which no school anterior to him has left a trace.

That the discovery of a principle big with advantages, as obvious as important to art, should have been reserved for the penetration of Leonardo, however singular, is less strange than that, when discovered and its powers demonstrated, it should, with the exception of one name, have not only met with no imitators, but with an ambiguous and even discouraging reception from the pupils of his own school, and some next allied to it. Vasari, his panegyrist rather than biographer, talks of it more as a singular phenomenon than as an evident principle, and avowing that he introduced a certain depth of shade into oil-painting, which enabled succeeding artists to relieve their figures more forcibly*, persevered to discolour walls and panels with washy flat insipidity. Bartolomeo della Porta† alone appears to have had sufficient compass of mind to grasp its energy and connect it with colour: from him, through Andrea del Sarto down to Pietro Berettini, who owed his effects rather to opposition of tints than to legitimate chiaroscuro, the Tuscan school gradually suffered it to dwindle into evanescence. Unless we were to consider its astonishing effects in some of Michelangelo's works in the light of imitations rather than as emanations of his own genius, which perhaps we are the less warranted to presume, as he seems to have paid no attention to Leonardo's discovery in its brightest period; for the groups of his celebrated cartoon exhibit little more than individual light and shade.

What the Tuscan school treated with neglect, the Roman appears not to have been eager to adopt: if Raphael did not

* Nell' arte della pittura aggiunse costui alla maniera del colorire ad olio, una certa oscurità; donde hanno dato i moderni gran forza e rilievo alle loro figure.—Vasari, *Vita di Lion. da Vinci*, p. 559. ed 1550.

† Fra Bartolomeo di San Marco; he died at Florence in 1517, in his forty-eighth year. — W.

remain a stranger to the theories of Leonardo and Fra Bartolomeo, he suffered the principle to lie dormant; for no production of his during his intercourse with them is marked by concentration of light or purity of shade or subordinate masses: nor is the interval between his last departure from Florence and his entrance of the Vatican discriminated by any visible progress in massing and illuminating a whole: the upper and lower parts of the Dispute on the Sacrament, cut sheer asunder, as a whole, are little relieved in either; and if the Parnassus and the School of Athens have the beginning, middle, and end of legitimate composition, they owe it to expression and feeling; nor can the more vigorous display of chiaroscuro in the works of the second stanza, the Deliverance of Peter, the Fall of Heliodorus, the Attila, the Mass of Bolsena, be referred to a principle of imitation, when we see it neglected in a subject where it might have ruled with absolute sway, in the Incendio del Borgo; and on the whole in every composition of the third and fourth stanza; a series of evidence that Raphael considered chiaroscuro as a subordinate vehicle, and never suffered its blandishments or energies to absorb meaning or to supplant expression and form*; but the harmony which immediately after him, Giulio Pipi and Polidoro only excepted, the rest of his pupils had sacrificed or consecrated to higher beauties, their successors the subsequent Roman school from the Zuccari through Giuseppe Cesari down to Carlo Maratta, if they

* In the greater part of the Cartoons, it does not appear that chiaroscuro had more than an ordinary share of attention.

In the Miraculous Draught, plain day-light prevails.

In the Miracle at the Temple-gate, a more forcible and more sublime effect would have been obtained from a cupola-light and pillars darkened on the foreground.

In the Execution of Elymas, composition and expression owe little of their roundness and evidence to chiaroscuro.

Apposition seems to have arranged the Sacrifice at Lystra.

If Dionysius and Damaris, in the cartoon of the Areopagus, had more forcibly refracted, by dark colours or shade, the light against the speaker, effect and subject would have gained.

Considered individually or in masses, the chiaroscuro in the cartoon of Ananias appears to be perfect; but the Donation of the Keys owes what impression it makes on us in a great measure to the skilful distribution of its light and shade.

did not entirely lose in a heavy display of academic pedantry, or destroy by the remorseless "bravura" of mannered practice, they uniformly polluted by bastard theories and adulterated methods of shade.

When I say that the Roman school uniformly erred in their principle of shade, I have not forgot Michelangelo da Caravaggio, whose darks are in such perfect unison with the lights of his chiaroscuro, that Annibale Carracci declared he did not grind colour but flesh itself for his tints ("che macinava carne"), and whom for that reason and on such authority I choose rather to consider as the head of his own school than as the member of another. In some of his surviving works, but far more frequently in those which without sufficient authenticity are ascribed to him, an abrupt transition from light to darkness, without an intervening demi-tint, has offended the eye and provoked the sarcasm of an eminent critic; but as long as the picture of the Entombing of Christ in the Chiesa Nuova at Rome may be appealed to; as long as the Pilgrims kneeling before the Madonna with the child in her arms, of Sant' Agostino at Rome, shall retain their tone; or the Infant Jesus, once in the Spada palace, crushing the serpent's head, shall resist the ravages of time — it will be difficult to produce in similar works of any other master or any other school, from Leonardo down to Rembrandt, a system of chiaroscuro which shall equal the severe yet mellow energy of the first; the departing evening ray and veiled glow of the second; or, with unimpaired harmony, the bold decision of masses and stern light and shade of the third.

The homage sparingly granted or callously refused to chiaroscuro by the two schools of design, was with implicit devotion paid to it by the nurse of colour, the school of Venice. Whether, as tradition, on the authority of Vasari, maintains, they received it as a principle of imitation from the perspicacity, or as a native discovery from the genius of Giorgione Barbarelli, though from what has been advanced on both sides of the question, it would be presumptuous positively to decide on either, it must be allowed, that if the Venetian received a hint from the Florentine, he extended it through a system, the harmony of which was all his own, and excelled in breadth and amenity the light which it could not surpass in splendour, added transparence to purity of

shade, rounded by reflexes and discovered by the contrast of deep with aerial colour, that energy of effect which mere chiaroscuro could not have reached, and which was carried near perfection by Paolo Cagliari.

Among the varied mischief poured into this country by the rapacious sophistry of traders and the ambitious cullibility of wealthy collectors, no fraud perhaps has been more destructive to the genuine appreciation of original styles than the baptism of pictures with names not their own: by this prolific method worse ones than those of Luini, Aretusi, Timoteo della Vite, Bonifacio, are daily graced with the honours due to Leonardo, Correggio, Raphael, Titian; though none have suffered more by the multiplication than Giorgione, whom shortness of life, a peculiar fatality of circumstances, and the ravages of time, have conspired to render one of the scarcest as well as least authenticated artists, even in Italy; to whom his earliest and latest biographers have been as critically unjust as chronologically inattentive; Vasari by transferring to another his principal work; Fiorillo by making him paint the portrait of Calvin the Reformer.*

To form our opinion, therefore, of Giorgione's chiaroscuro from a few portraits or single figures, if legitimate, often restored, or from the crumbling remnants of his decayed frescoes, would be to form an estimate of a magnificent fabric from some loose fragment or stone. To do full justice to his powers, we must have recourse to his surprising work in the School of San Marco, at Venice; a composition whose terrific graces Vasari descants on with a fervour inferior only to the artist's own inspiration, though he unaccountably ascribes it to the elder Palma.†

* In the following absurd description of the well-known picture in the Palace Pitti: "It consists of three half-figures, one of which represents Martin Luther in the habit of an Augustine Monk, who plays on a harpsichord: Calvin stands by him in a chorister's dress, with a violin in his hand: opposite you see a young lively girl in a bonnet with a plume of white feathers; by her Giorgione meant to represent the noted Catherine, Luther's mistress and wife," &c. (Fiorillo, vol. ii. p. 63.) To expose the ignorant credulity which dictated this passage, it is sufficient to observe that Giorgione died 1511, and that Calvin was born 1508.

† In every edition of the Vite subsequent to his own of 1550.[1] The

[1] The Giunti edition of 1668 was also published by Vasari. — W

"In the school of San Marco he painted the story of the ship which conducts the body of St. Mark through a horrible tempest, with other barges assailed by furious winds; and, besides, groups of aërial apparitions, and various forms of fiends who vent their blasts against the vessels, that, by dint of oars and energy of arms, strive to force their way through the mountainous and hostile waves which threaten to submerge them. You hear the howling blast, you see the grasp and fiery exertion of the men, the fluctuation of the waves, the lightning that bursts the clouds, the oars bent by the flood, the flood broke by the oars, and dashed to spray by the sinews of the rowers. What more? In vain I labour to recollect a picture that equals the terrors of this, whose design, invention, and colour make the canvas tremble! Often when he finishes, an artist, absorbed in the contemplation of parts, forgets the main point of a design, and, as the spirits cool, loses the vein of his enthusiasm; but this man, never losing sight of the subject, guided his conceit to perfection."

The effect of this work, when it drew such a stream of eulogy from lips else so frugal in Venetian praise, may be guessed at from the impression it makes in its present decay; for even now, it might defy the competition of the most terrific specimens in chiaroscuro, the boat of Charon in Michelangelo's Last Judgment, perhaps only excepted. Yet its master was defrauded of its glory by his panegyrist, whilst it was exciting the wonder and curiosity of every beholder. Lanzi is the only historian who notices its remains, and the real author *; we look in vain for it in Ridolfi, who, in his Life of Giorgione, treats us, instead of it, with a delectable account of a night-piece which he painted, exhibiting the tragi-comedy of castrating a cat.

It has been treated as a mistake to confine the chiaroscuro of a subject exclusively to one source; nor can it be doubted

following passage deserves to be given in his own words: "Giorgione da Castel franco; il quale sfumò le sue pitture e dette una terribil' movenzia a certe cose come è una storia nella Scuola di San Marco a Venezia, dove è un tempo turbido che tuona, et trema il dipinto, et le figure si muovono et si spiccano da la tavola per una certa oscurità di ombre bene intese." — *Proemio della terza Parte delle Vite*, p. 558.

* A la Scuola di S. Marco la Tempestà Sedata dal Santo, ove fra le altre cose sono tre remiganti ignudi, pregiatissimi pel disegno, e per le attitudini. Lanzi, *Storia, &c.* tomo ii. parte prima. Scuola Veneta.

that often it is, and has been proved to be, both necessary and advantageous to admit more; this is, however, a licence to be granted with considerable caution, and it appears to be the privilege of superior powers to raise a subject by the admission of subordinate, sometimes diverging, sometimes opposite streams of light, to assist and invigorate the effect of the primary one, without impairing that unity which alone can ensure a breadth to effect, without which each part, for mastery striving, soon would be lost in confusion, or crumble into fragments. The best instances of the advantages gained by the superinduction of artificial light appear to be the Pietro Martire and the San Lorenzo of Titian; if selection can be made from the works of a master, where to count is to choose. In the first, the stern light of evening, far advanced in the background, is commanded by the celestial emanation bursting from above, wrapping the summit in splendour, and diffusing itself in rays more or less devious over the scenery. The subject of San Lorenzo, a nocturnal scene, admits light from two sources — the fire beneath the saint, and a raised torch; but receives its principal splendour from the aërial reflex of the vision on high, which sheds its mitigating ray on the martyr.*

The nocturnal studies of Tintoretto from models and artificial groups have been celebrated: these, prepared in wax or clay, he arranged, raised, suspended, to produce masses, foreshortening, and variety of effect. It was thence he acquired that decision of chiaroscuro unknown to more expanded daylight, by which he divided his bodies, and those wings of obscurity and light by which he separated the groups of his composition, though the mellowness of his eye nearly always instructed him to connect the two extremes by something intermediate that partook of both, as the extremes themselves by the reflexes with the background or the scenery. The general rapidity of his process, by which he baffled his competitors, and often overwhelmed himself, did not indeed always permit him to attend deliberately to this principle, and often hurried him into an abuse of practice which, in the lights, turned breadth into mannered or insipid

* This picture is at Madrid, but there is a repetition of it, with slight alterations in the background, in the church of the Jesuits at Venice. These pictures are engraved by C. Cort and J. J. Oortman. — W.

flatness, and in the shadows into total extinction of parts. Of all this he has, in the schools of San Rocco and Marco, given the most unquestionable instances; the Resurrection of Christ and the Massacre of the Innocents comprehend every charm by which chiaroscuro fascinates its votaries. In the Vision, dewy dawn melts into deep but pellucid shade, itself rent or reflected by celestial splendour and angelic hues; whilst in the Infant-massacre at Bethlehem, alternate sheets of stormy light and agitated gloom dash horror on the astonished eye.

He pursued, however, another method to create, without more assistance from chiaroscuro than individual light and shade, an effect equivalent, and perhaps superior to what the utmost stretch of its powers could have produced in the Crucifixion of the Albergo, or Guest Room of San Rocco, the largest and most celebrated of his works. The multitudinous rabble dispersed over that picture (for such, rather than composition, one group excepted, that assemblage of accidental figures deserves to be called), he connected by a sovereign tone, ingulphing the whole in one mass of ominous twilight, an eclipse, or what precedes a storm, or hurricane, or earthquake; nor suffering the captive eye to rest on any other object than the faint gleam hovering over the head of the Saviour in the centre, and in still fainter tones dying on the sainted group gathered beneath the cross. Yet this nearly superhuman contrivance, which raises above admiration a work whose incongruous parts else must have sunk it beneath mediocrity, Agostino Carracci, in his print, with chalcographic callus, has totally overlooked; for, notwithstanding the iron sky that overhangs the whole, he has spread, if not sunshine, the most declared daylight from end to end, nor left the eye uninformed of one motley article, or one blade of grass.

With Iacopo Robusti may be named, though adopted by another school, Belisario Corenzio, an Achæan Greek, his pupil, his imitator in the magic of chiaroscuro, and, with still less compunction, his rival in dispatch and rapidity of hand. The immense compositions in which he overflowed, he encompassed, and carried to irresistible central splendour, by streams of shade, and hemmed his glories in with clouds, showery or pregnant with thunder. The monasteries and

churches of Naples and its dependencies abound in his frescoes.*

The more adscititious effects of chiaroscuro produced by the opposition of dark to lucid, opaque to transparent bodies, and cold to warm tints, though fully understood by the whole Venetian school, were nearly carried to perfection by Paolo Cagliari. There is no variety of harmonious or powerful combination in the empire of colour, as a substitute of light and shade, which did not emanate from his eye, variegate his canvas, and invigorate his scenery. Many of his works, however, and principally the masses scattered over his Suppers, prove that he was master of that legitimate chiaroscuro which, independent of colour, animates composition; but the gaiety of his mind, which inspired him with subjects of magnificence and splendour, of numerous assemblies canopied by serene skies or roving lofty palaces, made him seek his effects oftener in opposed tints than in powerful depths of light and shade.

But all preceding, contemporary, and subsequent schools, with their united powers of chiaroscuro, were far excelled, both in compass and magnitude of its application, by the genius of Antonio Allegri, from the place of his nativity surnamed Correggio. To them light and shade was only necessary as the more or less employed, or obedient attendant on design, composition, and colour. But design, composition, and colour were no more than the submissive vehicles or enchanted ministers of its charms to Correggio. If, strictly speaking, he was not the inventor of its element, he fully spanned its measure, and expanded the powers of its harmony through heaven and earth: in his eye and hand it became the organ of sublimity; the process of his cupolas made it no

* Corenzio was one of the notorious triumvirate of Naples, which acted with such tyranny towards all foreign artists who ventured to try their fortunes in that city: the other two were Spagnuoleto and Giambattista Caracciolo. This cabal was put an end to by the death of Caracciolo in 1641, the year of the death of Domenichino, who is said to have been one of its victims. Annibale Carracci, the Cavaliere d'Arpino, and Guido, were expelled by it from Naples. Such was the jealousy of these men, that they are said to have determined to expel or poison every distinguished painter who went to practise his art at Naples. See Dominici, *Vite de' Pittori, &c., Napolitani;* Lanzi, *Storia Pittorica, &c.* — W.

longer a question whether an art circumscribed by lines and figure could convey ideas of reality and immensity at once. Entranced by his spell, and lapped in his elysium, we are not aware of the wide difference between the conception of the medium, the place, space, and mode in which certain beings ought, or may be supposed to move, and that of those beings themselves; and forget, though fully adequate to the first, that Correggio was unequal to the second; that, though he could build heaven, he could not people it. If Michelangelo found in the depth of his mind, and in grandeur of line, the means of rendering the immediate effect of will and power intuitive in the Creation of Adam, by darting life from the finger of Omnipotence, the coalition of light and darkness opened to the entranced eye of Correggio the means of embodying the Mosaic "Let there be light," and created light in that stream of glory which, issuing from the divine Infant in his *Notte*, proclaims a God. If Thought be personified in the Prophets and Sibyls of the Sistine Chapel, he has made Silence audible in the slumbering twilight that surrounds the Zingara; and filled the gloom which embosoms Jupiter and Io with the whispers of Love.

And though perhaps we should be nearer truth by ascribing the cause of Correggio's magic to the happy conformation of his organs and his calm serenity of mind, than to Platonic ecstacies, a poet might at least be allowed to say "that his soul, absorbed by the contemplation of infinity, soared above the sphere of measurable powers, knowing that every object whose limits can be distinctly perceived by the mind, must be within its grasp; and, however grand, magnificent, beautiful, or terrific, fall short of the conception itself, and be less than sublime." In this, from whatever cause, consists the real spell of Correggio, which neither Parmigiano nor Annibale Carracci seem to have been able to penetrate — the Bolognese certainly not; for if we believe himself in his letters to Lodovico, expressive of his emotions at the first sight of Correggio's cupolas, he confines his admiration to the foreshortening and grace of forms, the successful imitation of flesh, and rigorous perspective.

Of Correggio's numerous pretending imitators, Lodovico Carracci appears to be the only one who penetrated his principle. The axiom, that the less the traces appear of the

means by which a work has been produced, the more it resembles the operations of nature, is not an axiom likely to spring from the infancy of art. The even colour, veiled splendour, the solemn twilight; that tone of devotion and cloistered meditation which Lodovico Carracci spread over his works, could arise only from the contemplation of some preceding style, analogous to his own feelings and its comparison with nature; and where could that be met with in a degree equal to what he found in the infinite unity and variety of Correggio's effusions? They inspired his frescoes in the cloisters of San Michele in Bosco. The foreshortenings of the muscular Labourers at the Hermitage, and of the ponderous Demon that mocks their toil; the warlike splendour in the homage of Totila; the nocturnal conflagration of Monte Cassino; the wild graces of deranged beauty, and the insidious charms of the sister nymphs in the garden scene, equally proclaim the pupil of Correggio.

His triumph in oil is the altar-piece of St. John preaching, in a chapel of the Certosa, at Bologna, whose lights seem embrowned by a golden veil, and the shadowy gleam of Vallombrosa; though he sometimes indulged in tones austere, pronounced, and hardy. Such is the Flagellation of Christ, in the same church, whose tremendous depth of flesh-tints contrasts the open wide-expanded sky, and less conveys than dashes its terrors on the astonished sense.

The schools of Bologna, Parma, Milano, with more or less geniality, imitated their predecessors, but added no new features to the theory of light and shade. As to its progress on this side of the Alps, it is better to say nothing than little on the wide range of Rubens and the miracles of Rembrandt.

Lecture VII. — On Design.

It is perhaps unnecessary to premise, that by the word Design I mean here not what that word denotes in a general sense — the plan of a whole, but what it applies in its narrowest and most specific sense — the *drawing* of the figures and component parts of the subject. The arts of design

have been so denominated from their nearly exclusive power of representing form, the base and principal object of plastic in contradistinction to vocal imitation. In forms alone the idea of existence can be rendered intuitive and permanent. Languages perish; words succeed each other, become obsolete and die; even colours, the dressers and ornaments of bodies, fade; lines alone can neither be obliterated nor misconstrued; by application to their standard alone, discrimination takes place, and description becomes intelligible. Here is the only ostensible seat of corporeal beauty; here only it can strictly exist; for, as the notion of beauty arises from the pleasure we feel in the harmonious co-operation of the component forms of some favourite object towards *one* end at *once* — it implies their immediate coexistence in the mass they compose; and as that immediately and at once can be perceived and conveyed to the mind by the eye alone, —figure is the legitimate vehicle of beauty, and design the physical element of the art.

Of design, the element is correctness and style; its extinction, incorrectness and manner. On the first principle of correctness, or the power of copying and drawing with precision the proportions of any object singly, or in relation with others, — as it may be considered in the light of an elementary qualification without which none would presume to enter himself a student of the Academy, — I should perhaps forbear to speak, did I not consider it as the basis of *design*, and were I not apprehensive that from the prevalent bend of the reigning taste, you do not lay on it all the stress you ought, and that, if you neglect the acquisition of the power to *copy* with purity and precision any given object, you will never acquire that of *imitating* what you have chosen for your model.

Our language generally confounds, or rather those who use it, when they speak of the art, the two words *copy* and *imitation*, though essentially different in their operation, as well as their meaning. An eye geometrically just, with a hand implicitly obedient, is the requisite of the former, without all choice, without selection, amendment, or omission; whilst choice, directed by judgment and taste, constitutes the essence of imitation, and raises the humble copyist to the noble rank of an artist.

Those who have stopped short at the acquisition of the former faculty have made a means their end, have debased the designer to the servile though useful draughtsman of natural history: and those who have aspired to the second without gaining the first, have substituted air for substance, and attempted to raise a splendid fabric on a quicksand: the first have retarded the progress of the art; the second have perverted its nature: each has erred, to prove that the coalition of both is indispensable.

It has been said by a high authority within these walls, and indeed in the whole province of modern art, that as painting is the student's ultimate aim, the sooner you acquire the power of using the pencil, the better; but I am persuaded that we should pervert the meaning of the great artist we speak of, were we to conclude, that by this observation rather than precept, he meant to discourage the acquisition of correctness. The zealous votary of Michelangelo could never mean this; he was too well acquainted with the process of that great man's studies, who placed the compass in the eye, not to find in the precision with which he had traced the elements, the foundation of his style. His breadth, he knew, was only the vehicle of his comprehension, and not vacuity; for breadth might easily be obtained, if emptiness can give it. All he meant to say was, that it mattered not whether you acquired correctness by the pencil, the crayon, or the pen, and that, as the sculptor models, the painter may paint his line*; for though neither he who anxiously forms lines without the power of embodying them, nor he who floats loosely on masses of colour, can be said to design, this being merely the slave of a brush, that of a

* The following is the passage alluded to: — "But while I mention the port-crayon as the student's constant companion, he must still remember that the pencil is the instrument by which he must hope to attain eminence. What, therefore, I wish to impress upon you is, that, whenever an opportunity offers, you paint your studies instead of drawing them. If one act excluded the other, this advice could not, with any propriety, be given. But if painting comprises both drawing and colouring, and if, by a short struggle of resolute industry, the same expedition is attainable in painting as in drawing on paper, I cannot see what objection can justly be made to the practice, or why that should be done by parts which may be done altog ther." *Works*, vol. i. p. 325. ed. Beechey. — W.

point, yet both tools may serve alternately or indiscriminately the purposes of the real designer. It is with the same intention of emancipating your practice from an exclusive and slavish attachment to any particular tool, that you are reminded by the same authority of the proverbial expression "Io tengo il disegno alla punta dei pennelli*;" "My design is at the point of my brush;"—though I am afraid the expression is dignified with the great name of Correggio through a lapse of memory, as it appears from Vasari that it was the petulant effusion of Girolamo da Trevigi†, an obscure painter, in derision of the elaborate cartoon prepared by Pierino del Vaga for his fresco-painting in the great saloon of the Doria Palace at Genoa.

The same authority has repeatedly told us, that if we mean to be correct, we must scrutinise the principles on which the ancients reared their forms. What were those principles?

I shall not digress in search of them to that primitive epoch when the cestrum performed the functions of light and shade, and perhaps supplied linear painting with the faint hues of a stained drawing; nor yet to the second period, when practice had rendered the artist bolder, and the pencil assisted the cestrum; when Parrhasius, on the subtle examination of line and outline, established the canon of divine and heroic form: we shall find them acknowledged with equal submission in the brightest era of Grecian execution, and the honour of exclusively possessing them contested by the most eminent names of that era, Apelles and Protogenes. The name of Apelles in ancient record, is the synonyme of unrivalled and unattainable excellence —he is the favourite mortal in whom, if we believe tradition, nature exhited *for once* a specimen of what her union

* Io ho l'arte sulla punta del pennello. Vasari, *Vita di Perino del Vaga*. — W.

† Girolamo da Trevigi was not an obscure painter; he was an excellent painter, but the versatility of his powers led him to too great a variety of subjects to enable him to be very conspicuous in one. He entered the service of Henry VIII. of England as painter, engineer and architect, and attained, says Vasari, to grandissima grandezza — the utmost distinction. He was unfortunately killed by a cannon-shot before Boulogne, in 1544, in his thirty-sixth year. — W.

with education and circumstances could produce; though the enumeration of his works by Pliny points out the modification which we ought to apply to the idea of that superiority. It consisted more in the union than in the extent of his powers; he knew better what he could do, what ought to be done, at what point he could arrive, and what lay beyond his reach than any other artist. Grace of conception and refinement of taste were his elements, and went hand in hand with grace of execution and taste in finish. That he built both, not on the precarious and volatile blandishments of colour, or the delusive charms of light and shade, but on the solid foundation of form, acquired by precision and obedience of hand—not only the confessed inability of succeeding artists to finish his ultimate Venus, but his well-known contest of lines with Protogenes (the correctest finisher of his time), not a legendary tale, but a well attested fact, irrefragably proves. The panel on which they were drawn made part of the Imperial collection in the Palatium, existed in the time of Pliny, and was inspected by him*; their evanescent subtilty, the only trait by which he mentions them, was not, as it appears, the effect of time, but of a delicacy, sweep, and freedom of hand nearly miraculous. What they were, drawn in different colours, and with the point of a brush, one upon the other, or rather within each other, it would be equally unavailing and useless for our purpose to inquire†; but the corollaries we may deduce from the contest are obviously these: that all consists of elements; that the schools of Greece concurred in one elemental principle—fidelity of eye

* This is an error; Pliny never saw this panel: it was consumed in the fire by which the imperial palace in the Palatine was destroyed in the time of Augustus. Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* xxxv. 10. 36. — W.

† The student will find this story detailed at length in the Editor's *Epochs of Painting*, ch. vii. p. 91 ff. If the text of Pliny will not admit of a deviation from the literal meaning of line, and allow us to interpret the *lineæ* as three rival sketches, we may still suppose that Apelles made an outline or profile of some portion of the human figure according to the ancient standard of beauty, which was improved upon by Protogenes, whose line was in its turn improved upon by the second effort of Apelles, the unerring line passing both *upon* and *between* his own original line and the correcting line of Protogenes; all three being easily distinguished, as each was executed in a distinct colour. — W.

and obedience of hand; that these form *precision*, precision *proportion**, proportion *symmetry*, and symmetry *beauty:* that it is the "little more or less," imperceptible to vulgar eyes, which constitutes *grace*, and establishes the superiority of one artist over another: that the knowledge of the degrees of things, or *taste*, presupposes a comparative knowledge of things themselves: that colour, grace, and taste are companions, not substitutes of form, expression, and character, and when they usurp that title, degenerate into splendid faults.

This precision of hand and eye presupposed, we now come to its application and object, Imitation, which rests on nature.

Imitation is properly divided into Iconic and Ideal. Iconic imitation is confined to an individuum or model, whose parts it delineates according to their character and essence, already distinguishing the native and inherent, from the accidental and adventitious parts. By the first it forms its standard, and either omits or subordinates the second to them, so as not to impede or to affect the harmony of a whole. This is properly the province of the portrait and the strictly historic painter, whose chief object and essential requisite is truth. Portrait in general, content to be directed by the rules of physiognomy, which shows the animal being it represents at rest, seldom calls for aid on pathognomy, which exhibits that being agitated, or at least animated and in motion; but when it does—and, though in a gentler manner than history, it always ought to do it—it differs in nothing from that, but in extent and degree, and already proceeds on the firm *permanent basis of* NATURE.

By Nature, I understand the general and permanent principles of visible objects, not disfigured by accident or distempered by disease, not modified by fashion or local habits. Nature is a collective idea, and though its essence exist in each individual of the species, can never *in its perfection* inhabit a *single* object: our ideas are the offspring of our senses; without a previous knowledge of many *central* forms, though we may copy, we can no more imitate, or, in other words, rise to the principle of action and penetrate the character of our model, than we can hope to create the

* Analogia. Vitruv. Commensio?

form of a being we have not seen, without retrospect to one we have. Meanness of manner is the infallible consequence that results from the exclusive recourse to one model: why else are those who have most closely adhered to, and most devoutly studied the model, exactly the most incorrect, the most remote from the real human form? Can there be anything more disgusting to an eye accustomed to harmony of frame, than the starveling forms of Albert Dürer, unless it be the swampy excrescences of Rembrandt? the figures of the former, proportions without symmetry; those of the Dutch artist, uniform abstracts of lumpy or meagre deformity: and yet the German was a scientific man, had measured, in his opinion had reduced to principles the human frame; whilst the Dutchman, form only excepted, possessed every power that constitutes genius in art, seldom excelled in invention and composition, and the creator of that magic combination of colour with chiaroscuro, never perhaps before, and surely never since attained. And did not the greatest master of colour but one, Tintoretto, if we believe his biographer Ridolfi, declare, that "to design from natural bodies, or what is the same, from the model, was the task of men experienced in art, inasmuch as those bodies were generally destitute of grace and a good form." We are informed by the Latin Editor of Albert Dürer's book on the Symmetry of the Human Body*, that during his stay at Venice he was requested by Andrea Mantegna, who had conceived a high opinion of his execution and certainty of hand, to pay him a visit at Mantua, for the express purpose of giving him an idea of that form, of which he himself had had a glimpse from the contemplation of the antique. Andrea was then ill, and expired before Albert could profit by his instructions†: this disappointment, says the author of

* Camerarius, *De Symmetria Partium Humanorum Corp., &c.* Nürn. 1532. — W.

† If this happened at all, it must have happened before 1505, at least before the expiration of that year: Giov. Bellini, with whom the author of the preface makes Albert acquainted too, died in 1512. Albert Dürer was born in 1471. [Fuseli is here entirely in error: Albert Dürer visited Venice in 1506; he relates his impressions and experience during that visit in his letters to his friend Pirkheiner: — "They" (the Venetian painters), says Albert, "abuse my style, and say that it is not after the antique, and therefore that it is not good." Albert admired the works

the anecdote, Albert never ceased to lament during his life. How fit the Mantuan was to instruct the German, is not the question here; the fact proves that Albert felt a want which he found his model could not supply, and had too just an idea of the importance of his art to be proud of dexterity of finger or facility of execution, when exerted only to transcribe or perpetuate defects—though these defects, almost incredible to tell, soon after invaded Italy, gave a check to the imitation of Michelangelo, supplanted his forms, and produced a temporary revolution of style in the Tuscan School, of which the frescoes of Andrea del Sarto and Franciabigio in San Giovanni dei Scholchi, and the latter productions of Jacopo da Puntormo are indisputable proofs.

But without recurring to other proofs, the method adopted by the Academy in the process of study, appears to be founded on the insufficiency of the model for attaining correctness. Why has it decreed that the student, before he be permitted to study life, should devote a certain period to the study of the antique? If you fancy the motive lay in the comparative facility of drawing from a motionless object. you lend your own misconception to the Academy; for, though in general it be undoubtedly more easy to draw an immovable object than one that, however imperceptibly, is in perpetual motion, and always varies its points of sight, it cannot be the case when applied to the antique; for where is the great name among the moderns that ever could reach the line and the proportions of the ancients? Michelangelo filled part of the Cappella Sistina with imitations, and sometimes transcripts of the Torso,—will any one stand forth and say that he reached it? Compare the Restoration of Montorsoli, Giacomo della Porta and Bernini, or Baccio Bandinello's Laocoon, with the rest of the figures, or the original, and deplore the palpable inferiority. What was it

of John Bellini, whom he considered the best painter in Venice. Bellini was then 80 years of age. Von Murr, *Journal zur Kunstgeschichte, &c.*, vol. x. p. 7. Nine years after this visit, in 1515, Raphael sent Albert two studies of a naked figure from Rome. Passavant, *Rafael von Urbino* Giovanni Bellini died in 1516; Andrea Mantegna died Sept. 7. 1506; Albert was in Venice in the spring of that year. On the deaths of Bellini and Mantegna, see Cadorin, *Dello Amore ai Veneziani di Tiziano, &c.*, and Zani, *Materiali per servire alla storia dell' incisione, &c.* p. 239. — W.]

that the Academy intended by making the antique the basis of your studies? what? but to lead you to the sources of form; to initiate you in the true elements of human essence; to enable you to judge at your transition from the marble to life, what was substance and possession in the individual, and what excrescence and want, what homogeneous, what discordant, what deformity, what beauty. It intended, by making you acquainted with a variety of figures, to qualify you for classing them according to character and function, what exclusively belongs to some or one, and what is the common law of all; to make you sensible that the union of simplicity and variety produces harmony, and that monotony or confusion commences where either is neglected, or each intrudes upon the other; in short, to supply by its stores, as far as time and circumstances permitted, what the *public* granted to the artists of Greece; what Zeuxis demanded and obtained from the people of Croton; what Eupompus pointed out to Lysippus; what Raphael, with better will than success, searched in his own mind*; and what Andrea Mantegna, however unqualified to find himself, desired to impress on the mind of Albert Dürer—a standard of FORM.†

I shall not here recapitulate the reasons and the coincidence of fortunate circumstances which raised the Greeks to the legislation of form: the standard they erected, the canon they set, fell not from heaven; but as they fancied themselves of divine origin, and religion was the first mover of their art, it followed that they should endeavour to invest their authors with the most perfect forms, and finding *that* the privilege of man, they were led to a complete and reasoned study of his elements and constitution; this, with their climate, which allowed that form to grow and to show itself to the greatest advantage, with their civil and political institutions, which established and encouraged exercises, manners, and opportunities, of all others best calculated to rear, accomplish, and produce that form, gave in successive periods birth to that style which beginning with the *essence*, proportion, proceeded to *character*, and rose to its height by uniting both with beauty. Of all three classes specimens in sufficient numbers have survived the ravages of time, the

* See Note to Barry's Third Lecture, *ante*, p. 131.—W.

† Idealismus.

most considerable of which, accumulated within these walls, form the ample stores of information which the Academy displays before its students; but—I say it with reluctance, though as teacher my office, as your reader my duty, demand it—displays not always with adequate success. Too often the precipitation with which admission from the plaster to the life-room is solicited; the total neglect of the antique after they have once invaded the model, and the equally slovenly, authoritative, and uninformed manner of drawing from it, prove the superficial impression of the forms previously offered to their selection. The reason of all this lies perhaps in a too early admission to either room. They enter without elements, and proceed without success; they are set to arrange and polish before they are acquainted with the rough materials. To one or both of these causes it is probably owing, that some consider it still as an undecided question whether the student, when admitted to draw from the living model, should confine himself to drawing punctiliously what he sees before him, or exercise that judgment which his course in the antique Academy has matured, and draw forms corresponding with each other. To me, after considering carefully what has been advanced on either side, it appears demonstrated, that the student is admitted to the life to avail himself of the knowledge he acquired from the previous study of classic forms. Here the office and the essential duties of the *visitor*, I speak with deference, begin, to confirm him where he is right, to check presumption, to lend him his own eyes, and, if it be necessary, to convince him by demonstration and example. But the human system cannot be comprehended by mere contemplation, or even the copy of the surface. The centre of its motion must be fixed, justly to mark the emanation of the rays. The uninterrupted undulation of outward forms, the waves of life, originate within, and, without being traced to that source, instruct less than confound. The real basis of sight is knowledge, and that knowledge is internal; for though, to speak with Milton, in poetry gods and demigods, "vital in every part, all heart, all eye, all ear, as they please limb themselves, and colour, shape, and size assume as likes them best;" in Art their substance is built on the brittle strength of bones, they act by human elements, and to descend must rise: hence, though

a deep and subtle knowledge of *anatomy* be less necessary to the painter than to the physician or surgeon; though the visible be his sphere and determine his limits, a precise and accurate acquaintance with the skeleton, the basis of the machine, is indispensable; he must make himself master of the muscles, tendons, and ligaments that knit the bones or cover and surround them, their antagonismus of action and reaction, their issues, their insertions, and the variety of shapes which they assume, when according to their relative foreshortenings, laxity, position, they indicate energy or slackness of action or of frame, its greater or less elasticity, furnish the characters of the passions, and by their irritability in louder or fainter tones become the echoes of every impression.

Nor can *physiognomy*, the companion of anatomy, which from the measure of the *solid* parts ascertains the precise proportion of the *movable*, be dispensed with. There have been, perhaps there are, teachers of art, who, whilst they admit physiognomy in the mass, refuse to acknowledge it in detail, or in other words, who admit a language, and reject its elements: as if the whole harmony of every proportionate object did not consist in the correspondence of singly imperceptible, or seemingly insignificant elements, and would not become a deformed mass without them. Let the twelfth part of an inch be added to, or taken from, the space between the upper lip* of the Apollo, and the god is lost.

The want of this necessary qualification is one of the chief causes of MANNER, the capital blemish of Design, in contradistinction to Style: Style pervades and consults the subject, and co-ordinates its means to its demands; Manner subordinates the subject to its means. A Mannerist is the paltry epitomist of nature's immense volume; a juggler, who pretends to mimic the infinite variety of her materials by the vain display of a few fragments of crockery. He produces, not indeed the monster which Horace recommends to the mirth of his friends, the offspring of grotesque fancy, and rejected with equal disdain or incredulity by the vulgar and refined, but others not less disgusting, though perhaps confined to a narrower circle of judges.

* Between the upper lip *and the nose*, probably. — W.

Mannerists may be divided into three classes :—

1st. Those who never consult nature, but at second hand; only see her through the medium of some prescription, and fix her to the test of a peculiar form.

2ndly. Those who persevere to look for her, or to place her on a spot where she cannot be found, some individual one or analogous models; and

3rdly. Those who, without ascending to the principle, content themselves with jumbling together an aggregate of style and model, tack deformity to beauty, and meanness to grandeur.

Of all Taste, the standard lies in the middle between extravagance and scantiness; the best becomes a flaw, if carried to an extreme, or indiscriminately applied. The Apollo, the Hercules of Glycon, and the figure misnamed Gladiator, are each models of style in their respective classes; but their excellence would become a flaw if indiscriminately applied to the distinct demand of different subjects. Neither the Apollo, the Hercules, nor the Gladiator, can singly supply the forms of a Theseus, Meleager, or Achilles, any more than the heroes on Monte Cavallo* theirs. It must however be owned, that he would commit a more venial error, and come nearer to the form we require in the Achilles of Homer, who should substitute the form of the Apollo or Hercules with the motion of the Gladiator to the real form, than he who should copy him from the best individual he could meet with: the reason is clear, there is a greater analogy between their form and action and that of Achilles, than between him and the best model we know alive. From the same principle, he who in a subject of pure history would attempt to introduce the generic and patriarchal forms in the Cappella Sistina would become ludicrous by the excess of contrast; for to him the organic characteristics of national proportion are little less essential than to the draughtsman of natural history or the portrait-painter. The

* These are Castor and Pollux, the two antique colossal figures, with horses, placed before the Palazzo Quirinale, at Rome, on the hill called Monte Cavallo, from these figures. An old Latin inscription says they are the work of Phidias and Praxiteles; but this inscription is probably spurious: Visconti supposes them to be Roman works of the time of Nero. — W.

skull of an European, though tinged with African hues, will not assimilate with the legitimate skull of a negro, nor can the foot of Meleager, or even of the Laocoon, ever be exchanged for that of a Mongul or Chinese; and he has probably mistaken his information who fancies that the expression, gait, and limbs of the Apollo can find their counterpart on the Apalachian mountains, or are related to the unconquered tribes of Florida.*

The least pardonable of all mannerists appears to be he who applies to meanness to furnish him with the instruments to dignity and grandeur. He who relies for all upon his model, should treat no other subject but his model; and I will venture to say, that even the extravagant forms, and, if you will, caricatures of Goltzius seduced by Spranger are preferable to those of Albert Dürer or Caravaggio, though recommended by the precision of the one and the chiaroscuro of the other, when applied to a pure heroic or symbolic subject; for though eccentric and extreme, they are eccentricities and extremes of the great style, in which meanness of conception is of all other blemishes the least excusable. From this blemish the mighty genius of Raphael, before it emerged from the dregs of Pietro Perugino, was not entirely free;—whether from timidity or languor of conception, the Christ in the Dispute on the Sacrament, though the principal figure, the centre from which all the rest like radii emanate and ought to emanate in due subordination, is a tame, mean figure, and, the placidity of the face perhaps excepted, for even that has a tincture of meannesss, inferior to all the patriarchs and doctors of that numerous composition.

The *third* class, or those who mix up a motley assemblage of ideal beauty and common nature, such as was pounded together by Pietro Testa and Gherard Lairesse, and from which neither Guido nor Poussin were entirely free—though perhaps not strictly chargeable with the absolute impro-

* Fuseli here alludes to an anecdote related of West while at Rome. As an American, he was looked upon as a kind of wonder by the virtuosi of Rome, who, anxious to observe the impressions made upon him by some of the treasures of the Vatican, took him first to the Apollo Belvedere. when, to their astonishment, he cried out—"A Mohawk warrior!" Upon West's explaining, however, the Italians considered it the most genuine criticism that had been passed upon the work. See Galt's *Life, &c.* — W.

priety of the first and the lowness of the second class, must be content with what we can spare of disapprobation from either: they surprise us into pleasure by glimpses of character and form, and as often disappoint us by the obtrusion of heterogeneous or vulgar forms. But this disappointment is not so general, because we want that critical acquaintance with the principles of ancient art which can assign each trunk its head, each limb its counterpart: a want even now so frequent, notwithstanding the boasted refinements of Roman and German criticisms, that a Mercury, if he have left his caduceus, may exchange his limbs with a Meleager, and he with an Antinous; perhaps a Jupiter on Ida his torso with that of a Hercules anapauomenos*, an Ariadne be turned into the head of a hornless Bacchus, and an Isis be substituted for every ideal female.

Lecture VIII. — Colour. — In Fresco Painting.

The painter's art may be considered in a double light, either as exerting its power over *the senses* to reach the intellect and heart, or merely as their handmaid, teaching its graces to charm their organs for their amusement only. In the first light, the senses, like the rest of its materials, are only a vehicle; in the second, they are the principal object and the ultimate aim of its endeavours.

I shall not inquire here whether the arts, as mere ministers of sensual pleasure, still deserve the name of liberal, or are competent exclusively to fill up the time of an intellectual being. Nature, and the masters of art, who pronounce the verdicts of nature in poetry and painting, have decided that they neither can attain their highest degree of accomplishment, nor can be considered as useful assistants to the happiness of society, unless they subordinate the vehicle, whatever it be, to the real object, and make sense the minister of mind.

When this is their object, *design*, in its most extensive, as in its strictest sense, is their basis; when they stoop to be

* In repose or reposing — W.

the mere playthings, or debase themselves to be the debauchers of the senses, they make *colour* their insidious foundation.

The greatest master of colour in our time, the man who might have been the rival of the first colourists in every age, Reynolds, in his public instruction uniformly persisted to treat colour as a subordinate principle. Though fully aware that without possessing at least a competent share of its numberless fascinating qualities, no man, let his style of design or powers of invention be what they may, can either hope for professional success, or can even properly be called a painter, and giving it as his opinion, on the authority of tradition, the excellence of the remaining monuments in sculpture, and the discovered, though inferior relics of ancient painting, that, if the coloured masterpieces of antiquity had descended to us in tolerable preservation, we might expect to see works designed in the style of the Laocoon, painted in that of Titian. He still persisted in the doctrine that even the colour of Titian, far from adding to the sublimity of the great style, would only have served to retard, if not to degrade, its impression. He knew the usurping, the ambitious principle inseparable from colour, and therefore thought it his duty, by making it the basis of ornamental styles, not to check its legitimate rights, but to guard against its indiscriminate demands.

It is not for me (who have courted and still continue to court colour as a despairing lover courts a disdainful mistress) to presume, by adding my opinion, to degrade the great one delivered; but the attachments of fancy ought not to regulate the motives of a teacher, or direct his plan of art. It becomes me, therefore, to tell you, that if the principle which animates the art, gives rights and privilege to colour not its own; if, from a medium, it raises it to a representative of all; if what is claimed in vain by form and mind, it fondly grants to colour; if it divert the public eye from higher beauties to be absorbed by its lures — then the art is degraded to a mere vehicle of sensual pleasure, an implement of luxury, a beautiful *but trifling* bauble, or a splendid fault.

To colour, when its bland purity tinges the face of innocence and sprouting life, or its magic charm traces in imperceptible transitions the forms of beauty; when its warm and ensanguined vigour stamps the vivid principle that animates

full-grown youth and the powerful frame of manhood, or in paler gradations marks animal decline; when its varieties give truth with character to individual imitation, or its more comprehensive tone pervades the scenes of sublimity and expression, and dictates the medium in which they ought to move, to strike our eye in harmony — to colour, the florid attendant of form, the minister of the passions, the herald of energy and character, what eye, not tinged by disease or deserted by nature, refuses homage?

But of colour, when equally it overwhelms the forms of infancy, the milky germ of life, and the defined lines of manhood and of beauty with lumpy pulp; when, from the dresser of the Graces, it becomes the handmaid of deformity, and with their spoils decks her limbs, shakes hands with meanness, or haunts the recesses of loathsomeness and horror*; when it exchanges flesh for roses, and vigour for vulgarity; absorbs character and truth in hues of flattery, or changes the tone demanded by sublimity and pathos into a mannered medium of playful tints — of colour, the slave of fashion and usurper of propriety, if still its charms retain our eye, what mind, unseduced by prejudice or habit, can forbear to lament the abuse?

The principles of colour, as varied, are as immutable as those of nature. The gradations of the system that connects *light* with *shade* are immense, but the variety of its imitation is regulated by the result of their union, simplicity — clearness if obtained by harmony.

Simplicity represents of every individual its unity, its whole. Light, and its organ, the eye, show us the whole of a being before its parts, and then diffuse themselves in visual rays over the limbs. Light with its own velocity fixes a point, the focus of its power; but as no central light can be conceived without radiation, nor a central form without extension, their union produces that immutable law of harmony which we call breadth.

One point is the brightest in the eye as on the object: this is the point of light. From it, in all directions, the existent parts advance or recede, by, before, behind each other; the

* S. Bartolomeo dello Spagnuoletto. S. Agatha Martirizzata nelle poppe di Seb. del Piombo. Il Porco Sventrato di Ostade. Il Macello dei Carracci. La Caccia Pidocchi di Murillo

two extremes of light and shade make a whole, which the local or essential colour defines — its coalition with the demi-tint, the shade and reflexes, rounds — and the correspondence of each colour with all, tunes.

The principles that regulate the choice of colours are, in themselves, as invariable as the light from which they spring, and as the shade that absorbs them. Their economy is neither arbitrary nor fantastic. Of this every one may convince himself who can contemplate a prism. Whatever the colours be, they follow each other in regular order; they emerge from, they flow into each other. No confusion can break or thwart their gradations from blue to yellow, from yellow to red; the flame of every light, without a prisma, establishes this immutable scale.

From this theory you will not expect that I should enter into chemic disquisitions on the materials, or into technic ones on the methods of painting. When you are told that *simplicity and keeping* are the basis of purity and harmony, that *one* colour has a greater power than a combination of two, that a mixture of three impairs that power still more, you are in possession of the great elemental principles necessary for the economy of your palette. Method, handling, and the modes of execution are taught by trial, comparison, and persevering practice, but chiefly by the nature of the object you pursue. The lessons of repetition, disappointment, and blunder impress more forcibly than the lessons of all masters. Not that I mean to depreciate or to level the comparative value or inferiority of materials, or that instruction which may shorten your road to the essential parts of study; but he is as far from nature who sees her only through the medium of his master, as he from colour who fancies it lies in costly, scarce, or fine materials; in curious preparations or mouldy secrets; in light, in dark, in smooth, in rough, or in absorbent grounds: it may be in all, but is in none of these. The masters of ancient colour had for their basis only four, and this simplicity made Reynolds conclude that they must have been as great in colour as in form.* He

* This is an error founded on a misconception of Pliny's. Pliny more than once contradicts his own assertion. The Greek painters even of an early period had a great variety of colours: their resources in this respect were quite as abundant as those of the painters of modern times. See the Editor's article COLORES in the *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, London, 1842. — W.

who cannot make use of the worst, must disgrace the best materials; and he whose palette is set or regulated by another's eye, renounces his own, and must become a mannerist. There is no compendious method of becoming great; the price of excellence is labour, and time that of immortality.

Colour, like design, has two essential parts, imitation and style. It begins in glare, is caught by deception, emerges to imitation, is finished by style, and debauched by manner.

Glare is always the first feature of a savage or an infant taste. The timid or barbarous beginner, afraid of impairing the splendour by diminishing the mass, exults in the Egyptian glare which he spreads over a surface unbroken by tint, and not relieved by shade. Such are in general the flaming remnants of feudal decoration. This is the stage of missal painting; what Dante called "alluminar," the art of Cimabue.* Its taste continued, though in degrees less shocking, to the time of Michelangelo and Raphael. Gods, and mothers of gods, apostles and martyrs, attracted devotion in proportion to the more or less gaudy colours in which they were arrayed. It was for this reason that Julius II. wished Michelangelo had added to the majesty of the patriarchs and sibyls by gold and lapis lazuli.

Deception follows glare; attempts to substitute, by form or colour, the image for the thing, always mark the puerility of taste, though sometimes its decrepitude. The microscopic precision of Denner, and even the fastidious, though broader detail of Gherard Dow, were symptoms of its dotage. The contest of Zeuxis and Parrhasius, if not a frolic, was an effort of puerile dexterity. But deception, though at its ultimate pitch never more than the successful mimicry of absent objects, and for itself below the aim of art, is the mother of imitation. We must penetrate the substances of things, acquaint ourselves with their peculiar hue and texture, and

* This is an allusion to the xith canto of the *Purgatorio*; —

Non se' tu Oderisi
L'onor d'Agobbio e l'onor di quell' arte
Ch' *alluminare* è chiamata in Parisi.

Indicating Oderigi of Gubbio, a celebrated *miniatore* of manuscripts in the thirteenth century. See on this subject the article PALÆOGRAPHY in the *Suppl. to the Penny Cyclop*, by the Editor of these Lectures. — W.

colour them in detail, before we can hope to seize their principle and give their general air.

Titian laboured first to make fac-similes of the stuffs he copied before he changed them into drapery, and gave them local value and a place. He learnt first to distinguish tint from tint, and give the skeleton of colour, before he emboldened himself to take the greatest quantity of colour in an object for the whole; to paint flesh which abounded in demi-tints entirely in demi-tints, and to deprive of all that which had but a few. It was in the school of deception he learnt the difference of diaphonous and opaque, of firm and juicy colour; that this refracts and that absorbs the light, and hence their place; those that cut and come forward, first, and those which more or less partake of the surrounding medium in various degrees of distance. It was here he learnt the contrast of the tints, of what is called warm and cold, and, by their balance, diffusion, echo, to poise a whole, His eye as musical, if I may be allowed the metaphor, as his ear, abstracted here, that colour acts, affects, delights, like sound; that stern and deep-toned tints rouse, determine, invigorate the eye, as warlike sound or a deep bass the ear; and that bland, rosy, grey, and vernal tints, soothe, charm, and melt like a sweet melody.

Such were the principles whose gradual evolution produced that coloured imitation which, far beyond the fascination of Giorgione, irresistibly entranced every eye that approached the magic of Tiziano Vecelli. To no colourist before or after him did nature unveil herself with that dignified familiarity in which she appeared to Titian. His organ, universal and equally fit for all her exhibitions, rendered her simplest to her most compound appearances with equal purity and truth. He penetrated the essence and the general principle of the substances before him, and on these established his theory of colour. He invented that breadth of local tint which no imitation has attained, and first expressed the negative nature of shade: his are the charms of glazing, and the mystery of reflexes, by which he detached, rounded, corrected, or enriched his objects. His harmony is less indebted to the force of light and shade, or the artifices of contrast, than to a due balance of colour equally remote from monotony and spots. His tone springs out of his sub-

ject, solemn, grave, gay, minacious, or soothing; his eye tinged nature with gold without impairing her freshness: she dictated his scenery. Landscape, whether it be considered as the transcript of a spot, or the rich combination of congenial objects, or as the scene of a phenomenon, as subject and as background, dates its origin from him. He is the father of portrait-painting, of resemblance with form, character with dignity, and costume with subordination.

Colour may be considered relatively to the whole or the detail of the parts that compose a picture. In that point of view it depends on the choice of a sovereign tone; in this on the skilful disposition, gradation, rounding, and variety of the subordinate tones, their principal light, the local colour, the half tints, the shades, and the reflexes.

The general regulation of the primary tone, and the specific arrangement of the subordinate ones for the rounding of every figure, is the same. In both the attention is to be directed to obtain a principal mass of light, and a predominant colour. This is to be supported by the mutual assistance and reciprocal relief of secondary ones, must be associated with the demi-tint and the shades, and recalled and relieved by the reflexes.

When treating on chiaroscuro, we have observed what may now be applied to colour, that the primary tone depends on choice, and is arbitrary; but it decides all the rest, as the tone of the first violin in a regular concert tunes all the voices and all the instruments. Its effect entirely depends on the union of the surrounding tones with it, and has no other value but what it derives from contrast. By this the simplest tone, well managed, may become rich, splendid, and harmonious; it is then the tone of nature; whilst the most brilliant colour, if contradicted or disappointed by the detail of inferior ones, may become heavy, leathern, and discordant.

The best illustration of these principles is in the celebrated Notte of Correggio, where the Infant from the centre tinges the whole with his rays; but perhaps still more in its companion at Dresden, the less known picture of St. Sebastian; for to produce union and tone in the nearly equilateral composition of a votive picture, required a deeper comprehension and a steadier eye. Like the picture of Raphael's at Foligno*,

* The Madonna di Foligno, now in the gallery of the Vatican at Rome

it represents the Madonna with the Infant in her arms, throned on clouds, in a central glory of sunny radiance, attended by angels, and surrounded by angelic forms: below are San Geminiano with a maiden by his side, San Rocco and S. Sebastian tied to a tree. The first surprise is caused by the central light of the glory, which has all the splendour of a sun, though its colour is a yellow comparatively faint, and terminates in brown. The Madonna, dressed in a robe of glowing lake and a dark blue mantle, seems to start from this body of light as from a sombre ground, and as the Infant from her. The carnation of both is of a low tint, to support the keeping of their distance. The two angels at her side, in tints reflected from the centre, address the Saints below, and connect the upper with the lower part of the picture, which emerges from the darksome clouds on which they stand, and gathers its tones of light from the emanations of the central one, but in subordinate flashes, vanishing from twilight into massy shade. By those who have not seen this picture *, a faint idea of its tone may be formed from the votive one of Parmigiano, at the Marquis of Abercorn's, which, had it received its last harmony, would probably have emulated the principle of that we have described.

The tones fit for poetic painting are, like its styles of design, generic or characteristic. The former is called negative, or composed of little more than chiaroscuro; the second admits, though not ambitiously, a greater variety and subdivision of tint. The first is the tone of Michelangelo, the second that of Raphael. The sovereign instrument of both is undoubtedly the simple, broad, pure, fresh, and limpid vehicle of Fresco.† Fresco, which does not admit of that refined variety of tints that are the privilege of oil painting, and from the rapidity with which the earths, its chief materials, are absorbed, requires nearly immediate termination, is

It was taken by the French from Foligno to Paris, where it was transferred from the wood on which it was originally painted, to canvas. — W.

* It is engraved by P. A. Kilian, and drawn in lithography by Hanfstängel. — W.

† Fresco is an Italian term signifying simply *sul fresco intonaco*, on the *fresh coat*, or *on the wet* plaster: its vehicle is water. See some valuable and interesting details on this process of painting in the Appendices to the Reports of the Commissioners on the Fine Arts — 1842-1843. — W.

for those very reasons the immediate minister and the aptest vehicle of a great design. Its element is purity and breadth of tint. In no other style of painting could the generic forms of Michelangelo have been divided, like night and day, into that breadth of light and shade which stamps their character. The silver purity of Correggio is the offspring of fresco; his oil paintings are faint and tainted emanations of the freshness and "limpidezza" in his frescoes. Oil, which rounds and conglutinates, spreads less than the sheety medium of fresco, and if stretched into breadth beyond its natural tone, as the spirits which are used to extenuate its glue, escape, returns upon itself, and oftener forms surfaces of dough, or wood, or crust, than fleshy fibre.* Oil impeded the breadth even of the elemental colours of Titian in the Salute.† The minute process inseparable from oil is the reason why Michelangelo declared oil painting to be a woman's method, or of idle men.‡ The master of the colour we see in the Sistina could have no other; for though colour be the least considerable of that constellation of powers that blaze in its compartments, it is not the last or least accomplishment of the work. The flesh of the academic figures on the frames of the ceiling is a flesh even now superior to all the flesh of Annibale Carracci in the Farnese§, generally pale though not cold, and never bricky though sometimes sanguine. The Jeremiah among the Prophets glows with the glow of Titian, but in a breadth unknown to Giorgione and to him. The Eve under the Tree has the bland pearly harmony of Correggio; and some of the bodies in air on the lower part of the Last Judgment, less impaired by time or accident than the rest, for juice and warmth may still defy all competition.‖ His colour sometimes even borders on

* This is purely fanciful. — W.

† These are the pictures which were removed to the church of Santa Maria della Salute from Santo Spirito. — W.

‡ Nothing of the kind. See note, *ante*. — W.

§ The celebrated Farnese Gallery in the Palazzo Farnese at Rome, painted by Annibale Carracci and his assistants in 1600–4. The two cartoons by Agostino Carracci, in the National Gallery, are the designs of two of the principal compartments of this gallery. — W.

‖ The Last Judgment is now so much obscured, that many parts of it are scarcely visible; there was little colour left in 1838. This great work may be best examined in the beautiful small copy of it by Marcello

characteristic variety, as in the composition of the Brazen Serpent. That a man who mastered his materials with such power did reject the certain impediments and the precarious and inferior beauties of oil, which Sebastian del Piombo proposed for the execution of the Last Judgment, and who punished him for the proposal with his disdain for life, cannot be wondered at. If I have mentioned particular beauties of colour, it was more for others than to express what strikes *me* most. The parts, in the process of every man's work, are always marked with more or less felicity; and great as the beauties of those which I distinguished are, they would not be beauties in my eye, if obtained by a principle discordant from the rest.

The object of my admiration in Michelangelo's colour is the tone, that comprehensive union of tint and hue spread over the whole, which seems less the effect of successive labour than a sudden and instantaneous exhalation, one principle of light, local colour, demi-tint, and shade. Even the colours of the draperies, though perhaps too distinct, and often gayer than the gravity of their wearers or the subject allowed, are absorbed by the general tone, and appear so only on repeated inspection or separation from the rest. Raphael did not come to his great work with the finished system, the absolute power over the materials, and the conscious authority of Michelangelo.* Though the august plan which his mind had conceived, admitted of lyric and allegoric ornament, it was, upon the whole, a drama and characteristic: he could not, therefore, apply to its mass the generic colour of the Sistina. Hence we see him struggling at the onset

Venusti, in the gallery of Naples, or in the great copy recently made by M. Sigalon, and now in the Académie des Beaux Arts at Paris. — W.

* On the contrary, Michelangelo had had no experience whatever in painting when he was ordered by Julius II. to paint the vault of the Cappella Sistina, and he endeavoured to transfer the commission to Raphael, already a painter of experience and reputation. When Michelangelo found he could not escape, he employed some fresco painters from Florence, to execute the work from his designs; but, being dissatisfied with the performance of these painters he eventually undertook the execution of the work himself; and these frescoes occupied him only twenty months, and the whole ceiling was completed in the autumn of 1512. See the *Catalogue of the National Gallery*, Michelangelo. — W.

between the elements of that tone which the delineation of subdivided character and passions demanded, and the long imbibed habits and shackles of his master. But one great picture decided the struggle. This is evident from the difference of the upper and lower part of the Dispute on the Sacrament. The upper is the summit of Pietro Perugino's style, dignified and enlarged; the lower is his own.* Every feature, limb, motion, the draperies, the lights and shades of the lower part, are toned and varied by character. The florid bloom of youth tinged with the glow of eagerness and impatience to be admitted; the sterner and more vigorous tint of long initiated and authoritative manhood; the inflamed suffusion of disputative zeal; the sickly hue of cloistered meditation; the brown and sun-tinged hermit, and the pale decrepit elder, contrast each other; but contrasted as they are, their whole action and colour remain subordinate to the general hue diffused by the serene solemnity of the surrounding medium, which is itself tinctured by the effulgence from above. A sufficient balance of light and shade maintains the whole, though more attention be paid to individual discrimination than masses. In the economy of the detail we find the lights no longer so white, the local colour no longer so crude, the passages to the demi-tints not so much spotted with red, nor the demi-tints themselves of so green a cast as in the four Symbolic Pictures on golden grounds of the ceiling.†

It appears to me upon the whole, that for a general characteristic tone Raphael has never exceeded the purity of this picture. If in the School of Athens he has excelled it in individual tints, in tints that rival less than challenge the glow and juice of Titian, they are scattered more in fragments than in masses, and at the expense or with neglect of

* This fresco was executed in 1509, and is in Raphael's second or Florentine manner. — W.

† These are Theology, Poetry, Philosophy, and Justice, one over each of the four great frescoes of this apartment, — the Dispute on the Sacrament, Mount Parnassus, the School of Athens, and Jurisprudence, illustrated by Gregory XI. delivering the Decretals, and the Emperor Justinian delivering the Pandects to Tribonianus, representing Ecclesiastical and Civil Law: above and between these two compositions are figures of Prudence, Fortitude, and Temperance. The whole of these frescoes were completed in 1511. — W.

general unison, if we except the central and connecting figure of Epictetus. The predominance of tender flesh, and white or tinted drapery on the foreground, whilst the more distant groups are embrowned by masculine tints and draperies of deeper hue, prove, that if Raphael could command individual colour, he had not penetrated its general principle.

The Parnassus in the same room has a ruling tone, but not the tone of a poetic fancy. Aërial freshness was his aim, and he is only frigid. Its principal actors are ideals of divine nature, and ought to move in a celestial medium, and Raphael had no more an adequate colour than adequate forms for either. But whatever is characteristic, from the sublimity of Homer to the submissive affable courtesy of Horace and the directing finger of Pindar, is inimitable and in tune.

The ultimate powers of Raphael, and, as far as I can judge, of Fresco, appear to me collected in the astonishing picture of the Heliodorus.* This is not the place to dwell on the loftiness of conception, the mighty style of design, the refined and appropriate choice of character, the terror, fears, hopes, palpitation of expression, and the far more than Correggiesque graces of female forms; the colour only, considered as a whole, or in subordination, is our object. Though by the choice of the composition, the background, which is the sanctuary of the temple, embrowned with gold, diffuses a warmer gleam than the scenery of the foreground, its open area, yet, by the dexterous management of opposing to its glazed cast a mass of vigorous and cruder flesh tints, a fiercer ebullition of impassioned hues — the flash of steel and iron armour, and draperies of indigo, deep black, and glowing crimson — the foreground maintains its place, and all is harmony.

Manifold as the subdivisions of character are — angelic, devout, authoritative, violent, brutal, vigorous, helpless, deli-

* Heliodorus driven from the Temple of Jerusalem, from the Second Book of Maccabees: — "For there appeared to them a horse with a terrible rider upon him, adorned with a very rich covering: and he ran fiercely, and struck Heliodorus with his fore-feet; and he that sat upon him seemed to have armour of gold. Moreover there appeared two other young men beautiful and strong, bright and glorious, and in comely apparel, who stood by him on either side, and scourged him without ceasing with many stripes." (Ch. ii. 25, 26.) All the frescoes of this chamber were completed in 1514. — W.

cate; and various as the tints of the passions that sway them appear — elevated, warmed, inflamed, depressed, appalled, aghast, they are all united by the general tone that diffuses itself from the interior repose of the sanctuary, smoothens the whirlwind that fluctuates on the foreground, and gives an air of temperance to the whole.

Lecture IX. — Colour. — Oil Painting.

Having finished the preceding lecture with observations on Fresco, a method of painting almost as much out of use as public encouragement, and perhaps better fitted for the serene Italian than the moist air of more northern climates, I now proceed to Oil Painting.* The general medium of paint is oil; and in that, according to the division of our illustrious commentator on Du Fresnoy, "all the modes of harmony, or of producing that effect of colours which is required in a picture, may be reduced to three, two of which belong to the grand style, and the other to the ornamental. The first may be called the Roman manner, where the colours

* *Oil painting*, in its common acceptation, as is well known, is of comparative recent discovery; but this method is not exactly described by the term *oil painting*, which is not new. The method of the Van Eycks, the great improvers of oil painting, was actually *varnish painting*, which is evident from the passage in the life of Antonello of Messina, where Vasari relates its accidental discovery by John Van Eyck in his search for a varnish: — "At last, having tried many things, separately and compounded, he discovered that linseed and nut oils were the most siccative: these, therefore, he *boiled with other mixtures*, and produced that *varnish* which he, and indeed every painter in the world, had long desired." This *varnish*, or, in the words of Vasari, *these oils* (that is, so prepared) he found to be the best vehicle for his colours, so brilliant a vehicle that his pictures did *not require* varnishing.

Vasari here gives the credit of the invention to John Van Eyck, while circumstances, and particularly the great difference between the ages of the two brothers, point out Hubert as the discoverer. See on this subject the Editor's *Epochs of Painting*, ch. xxiii. xxiv. Van Mander fixes this discovery in 1410, but this may not be correct. Hubert Van Eyck died in 1426, aged 60, and John in 1445, aged about 50. The student will find the whole subject of oil vehicles treated with the utmost detail in Eastlake's *Materials for a History of Oil Painting*. — W.

are of a full and strong body, such as are found in the Transfiguration. The next is that harmony which is produced by what the ancients called the *corruption** of the colours, by mixing and breaking them till there is a general union in the whole, without any thing that shall bring to your remembrance the painter's palette or the original colours. This may be called the Bolognian style; and it is this hue and effect of colours which Lodovico Carracci seems to have endeavoured to produce, though he did not carry it to that perfection which we have seen since his time in the small works of the Dutch school, particularly Jan Steen, where art is completely concealed, and the painter, like a great orator, never draws the attention from the subject on himself. The last manner belongs properly to the ornamental style, which we call the Venetian, being first practised at Venice, but is perhaps better learned from Rubens. Here the brightest colours possible are admitted, with the two extremes of warm and cold, and these reconciled by being dispersed over the picture, till the whole appears like a bunch of flowers."

As I perfectly coincide with this division, and the practical corollaries deduced from it, what I have to say relatively to each of these classes or styles, will rather be a kind of commentary on it, than a text containing a doctrine of my own.

If the Roman style of historic colour be the style of Raphael in the Transfiguration, it died with him; it is certainly not that Roman style which distinguishes that school from Giulio Romano to Carlo Maratta.

Though the Transfiguration be more remarkable for the characteristic division of its parts than for its masses, yet it has more than the breadth, a closer alliance and larger proportion of correspondent colours, and a much purer theory of shade than we meet with in the subsequent pictures of the same school, the picture at Genoa of the Lapidation of St. Stephen, by Giulio Romano, only excepted, which was probably soon after framed on the principles of the Transfiguration.

The crudeness of colour and asperity of tone observable in the Roman school, though founded on simplicity, is perhaps a greater proof of their want of eye and taste than of a pure historic principle. Harmony of colour consists in the due

*Φθορα.

balance of all, equally remote from monotony and from spots. Though each part of Roman pictures be painted with sufficient breadth of manner, their discordance is such that they do not coalesce into one whole, but appear unconnected frag ments in apposition. Their theory of shade is so defective, that the parts deprived of light of the same body, or the same piece of drapery, are not effaced, but coloured. If the positive reds and blues of the Roman school invigorate the eye, they likewise command it, and counteract the grandeur of history in a degree not much inferior to the bad effect produced by the imitation of stuffs discriminated according to their texture; their bright asperity and bleak purity equally pervert the negative and subordinate character of drapery, and attract a larger share of attention from the beholder than they deserve. A Madonna in the hands of Carlo Maratta, and sometimes even of Raphael, at least in his earlier productions, is the least visible part of herself. The most celebrated Madonna of Andrea del Sarto, though in fresco, is certainly more indebted to her drapery than her face, perhaps still more to the sack on which her husband rests, and from which the picture got its name.

From this censure we ought to except Michelangelo da Caravaggio, and Andrea Sacchi, whose works, though else so dissimilar in principle and execution, coincide in reducing colour frequently to little more than chiaroscuro; the one for melancholy and forcible, the other for visionary or devotional effects.

The Pilgrims Adoring the Madonna, with the Infant in Sant' Agostino, by the former, seem, not painted, but tinged in the last golden ray of departing eve, whilst the Vision of San Romualdo*, by the latter, surrounds us with grey twilight and gradual evanescence.

A general style of colours thus amalgamated appears to me a principle much superior to that of *corruption* of them, which Plutarch mentions as the invention of Apollodorus the Athenian, when painting had scarcely emerged from the linear process, and it required some courage to wield a brush.† If the ancients ever possessed the Bolognese corruption of colours, it must have been in periods of refine-

* Now in the Vatican, and considered Sacchi's masterpiece. — W.

† See notes, *ante*. — W.

ment. The Θθορα of Apollodorus was probably the invention of demi-tints, the effect of which is produced by "corrupting" or lowering the elemental purity of the two of which it is composed. The axiom, that the less the traces appear of the means by which a work has been produced, the more it resembles the operations of nature — is not an axiom likely to spring from the infancy of art.

The even colour, veiled splendour, the solemn twilight, that tone of devotion and cloistered meditation which Lodovico Carracci spread over his works, could arise only from the contemplation of various preceding styles, or their comparison with nature and the object of his choice.

The ideal of his style is a harmony equally remote from affected brilliancy and vulgar resemblance of tints. Its element is gravity, and whenever this inspires not its imitation, it will be less serious than sullen, flat, not even, heavy without vigour, and the dispatching tool of mediocrity.

If this be that dignified colour of Lombardy recommended by Agostino Carracci, his own picture of the Communion of St. Jerome, and the dead Christ among the Maries by Annibale (which we have seen here *) excepted, its principle was not adopted by that third ruler of the Carracci school, nor any of its pupils.

Annibale, from want of feelings, changed the mild evening ray of his cousin to the sullen light of a cloudy day, and in the exultation of mechanic power swims on his work like oil. Guido was too gay and affected, Guercino too cutting and vulgar, Albano too airy and insubstantial for it. Under the hand, and guided by the sensibility of Lodovico, it communicated itself even to the open, silvery tone of Fresco.

In the cloisters of San Michele in Bosco, it equally moderates the deep-toned tints of the muscular labourers of the hermitage, and of the ponderous demon who mocks their toil; the warlike splendour in the homage of Totila, the flash of the nocturnal conflagration, and the three insidious nymphs in the garden scene, and even now, though nearly in a state of evanescence, seem moulded by the hand and tinged by the breath of love — all are sainted by this solemn tone.

Its triumph in oil is the altar-piece of St. John preaching, in a chapel of the Certosa, whose lights seem embrowned by

* Now at Castle Howard. — W.

a golden veil, and the shadowy gleam of Valombrosa; but Lodovico sometimes indulged in tones austere, pronounced, and hardy. Such is the Flagellation of Christ in the same church, of which the tremendous depth of flesh-tints contrasts the open, wide-expanded sky, and less conveys than dashes its terrors on the astonished sense.

The third, or ornamental style, could scarcely arise in any other state of Italy than Venice. Venice was the centre of commerce, the repository of the riches of the globe, the splendid toy-shop of the time; its chief inhabitants princely merchants, or a patrician race elevated to rank by accumulations from trade or naval prowess; the bulk of the people mechanics or artisans, administering the means, and, in their turn, fed by the produce of luxury. Of such a system, what could the art be more than the parasite? Religion itself had exchanged its gravity for the allurements of the ear and eye, and even sanctity disgusted, unless arrayed by the gorgeous hand of fashion. Such was, such will always be the birthplace and the theatre of colour; and hence it is more matter of wonder that the first and greatest colourists should so long have foreborne to overstep the modesty of nature in the use of that alluring medium, than that they sacrificed, *in part*, propriety to its golden solicitation.

I say *in part*, for Titian perhaps never, Paolo and Tintoretto, though by much too often, yet not always, spread the enchanting nosegay, which is the characteristic of this style, with indiscriminate hand. The style of Titian may be divided into three periods: when he copied, when he imitated, when he strove to generalise, to elevate, or invigorate, the tones of nature. The first is anxious and precise, the second is beautiful and voluptuous, the third sublime. In the second the parts lead to the whole, in this the whole to the parts; it is that master-style which in discriminated tones imparts to ornament a monumental grandeur. It gave that celestial colour which consideration like an angel spread over the Salutation in San Rocco; the colour that wafts its wide expanse and elemental purity over the primitive scenes of his Abel, Abraham, and David, in the Salute; the colour that tinged with artless solemn majesty the Apotheosis of the Virgin in the church de' Frati, embodied adoration in its portraits, and changed the robes of pomp and warlike

glitter, to servants of simplicity. Such is the tone which diffuses its terrors and its glories in Pietro Martire over the martyred hermits of the mountain forest, and taught the painter's eye to "glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven." If this be ornament, what but the Vatican can the schools of Design oppose to its grandeur and propriety!

If all ornament be allegoric, if it imply something allusive to the place, the person, or the design for which it is contrived, from that of a public building or a temple, to that of a library or the decorations of a toilette, how have the schools of Design, after the demise of Michelangelo and Raphael, observed its principle? Annibale Carracci, with the Cappella Sistina and the Vatican before his eye, has filled the mansion of Episcopal dignity with a chaotic series of trite fable and bacchanalian revelry, without allegory, void of allusion, merely to gratify the puerile ostentation of dauntless execution and academic skill. And if we advert to a greater name, that of Pellegrino Tibaldi, is it easy to discover what relation exists between the adventures of Ulysses and the purposes and pursuits of the academical Institute of Bologna? and is it sufficient to exculpate him from impropriety of choice in his plan, if we say that the ceiling of Pellegrino Tibaldi is a doctrine of style, and that design and style are the principal pursuit of the students?

But perhaps it is not to Titian, but to Tintoretto and Paolo Cagliari, that the debaucheries of colour and blind submission to fascinating tints, the rage of scattering flowers to no purpose, are ascribed.* Let us select from Tintoretto's most extensive work — the Scuola of San Rocco, the most extensive composition, and his acknowledged masterpiece, the Crucifixion, and compare its tone with that of Rubens and of Rembrandt for the same subject. What impression feels he, who for the first time casts a glance on the immense scenery of that work? a whole whose numberless parts are connected by a lowering, mournful, minacious tone. A general fearful silence hushes all around the central figure

* This is not the general character of the works of Tintoretto; he is frequently dark, opaque, and muddy. His most distinctive character is contrasts of light and dark: when asked once which were the prettiest colours, he answered, "Black and white!" Many of his works exemplify this taste. — W.

of the Saviour suspended on the cross, his fainting mother, and a group of male and female mourners at his foot: — a group of colours that less imitate than rival nature, and tinged by grief itself; a scale of tones for which even Titian offers to me no parallel: yet all equally overcast by the lurid tone that stains the whole, and like a meteor hangs in the sickly air. Whatever inequality or derelictions of feeling, whatever improprieties of commonplace, of local and antique costume, the master's rapidity admitted to fill his space, and they are great, all vanish in the power which compresses them into a single point, and we do not detect them till we recover from our terror.

The picture of Rubens, which we oppose to Tintoretto, was painted for the church of St. Walburgha at Antwerp, after his return from Italy; and has been minutely described, and as exquisitely criticised, by Reynolds: "Christ," he says, "is nailed to the cross, with a number of figures exerting themselves to raise it. The invention of throwing the cross obliquely from one corner of the picture to the other, is finely conceived; something in the manner of Tintoretto:" so far Reynolds. In Tintoretto it is the cross of one of the criminals that they attempt to raise, who casts his eye on Christ already raised. The body of Christ is the grandest, in my opinion, that Rubens ever painted; it seems to be imitated from the Torso of Apollonius, and that of the Laocoon. How far it be characteristic of Christ, or correspondent with the situation, I shall not here inquire; my object is the ruling tone of the whole, and of this the criticism quoted says not a word, though much of local colour and gray and ochry balance. Would so great a master of tone as Reynolds have forgot this master-key, if he had found it in the picture? The fact is, the picture has no other than the painter's usual tone: Rubens came to his work with gay technic exultation, and, by the magic of his palette, changed the terrors of Golgotha to an enchanted garden and clusters of flowers. Rembrandt, though on a smaller scale of size and composition, concentrated the tremendous moment in one flash of pallid light. It breaks on the body of Christ, shivers down his limbs, and vanishes on the armour of a crucifix; the rest is gloom.

Of Paolo Veronese, who was by far the most intemperate

and florid of ornamental masters, the political allegories on the platfonds and compartments of the Ducal Palace, and the religious legends painted in the refectories of the convents, or as altar-pieces in the churches of Venice, differ materially in tone and style. Those were painted for the senate, these for the people; and the superior orders were supposed to be better judges of real grandeur and propriety than monastic ignorance and the bigoted and vulgar majority of the crowds that thronged the churches.

If, therefore, I were able to dissent in any thing relative to colour from the great master whose classification I comment, I should probably hesitate on the advice of adopting the palette of Rubens for the regulation of the tones that compose the Venetian style, of which his flowery tint formed but a part. What has been said of Michelangelo in FORM, may be said of Rubens in COLOUR: they had but one. As the one came to nature, and moulded her to his generic form, the other came to nature and tinged her with his colour — the colour of gay magnificence. He levelled his subject to his style, but seldom if ever his style with his subject; whatever be the subject of Rubens, legend, allegoric, stern, mournful, martyrdom, fable, epic, dramatic, lyric, grave, or gay — the hues that embody, the air that tinges them, is indiscriminate expanse of gay magnificence. If the economy of his colours be that of an immense nosegay, he has not always connected the ingredients with a prismatic eye; the balance of the iris is not arbitrary, the balance of his colour often is. It was not to be expected that correctness of form should be the object of Rubens, though he was master of drawing, and even ambitious in the display of anatomic knowledge; but there is no mode of incorrectness, unless what directly militated against his style, such as meagreness, of which his works do not set an example. His male forms, generally the brawny pulp of slaughtermen; his females, hillocks of roses in overwhelmed muscles, grotesque attitudes, and distorted joints, are swept along in a gulph of colours, as herbage, trees, and shrubs, are whirled, tossed, and absorbed by inundation.

But whenever a subject comes genially within the vortex of his manner, such as that of the Gallery of the Luxembourg, it then is not only characteristically excellent, but

includes nearly a superhuman union of powers. In whatever light we consider that astonishing work, whether as a series of the most sublime conceptions, regulated by an uniform comprehensive plan, or as a system of colours and tones, exalting the subject, and seconded by magic execution, whatever may be its Venetian or Flemish flaws of mythology and Christianity, ideal and contemporary costume promiscuously displayed, it leaves all plans of Venetian allegory far behind, and rivals all their execution; if it be not equal in simplicity, or emulate in characteristic dignity, the plans of Michelangelo and Raphael, it excels them in the display of that magnificence which no modern eye can separate from the idea of Majesty.

Lecture X. — The method of fixing a Standard and defining the proportions of the Human Frame, with directions to the student in copying the life.

The methods of fixing a standard and defining the proportions of the human frame, are either *analytic* or *synthetic*, from the whole to the parts, or from the parts to the whole, and have been promiscuously adopted. The human is the measure of perfection in Vitruvius; he applies its rules to architecture, and indeed to every object of taste.

The length of human proportion in Vitruvius, measured by a perpendicular, or a horizontal, from the middle finger points of both arms extended, is ten heads, the head measured from the chin to the hair-roots of the front; and eight if the head be measured from the extremity of the chin to the vertex of the crown. Three is the favourite number by which the theorists of proportion have divided the human structure, as containing a beginning, a middle, and an end; and Pliny observes that we attain the half of our growth in the third year. The body, as well as all its members, consists of three main parts, which correspond with each other, in the same proportion as the parts of the subordinate members among themselves: the head and body are in the same unison of measure with the thighs and legs, as the thighs with the legs and feet, or the upper part of the arm to the

elbow and the hand. Thus the face is divided into three parts, or three times the length of the nose: never into four, as some have imagined; for the upper part of the head, from the hair-roots on the front to the top, measured perpendicularly, has only three-fourths of the nose length, or is in proportion to the nose as nine to twelve.

The rules of proportion originated, probably, with sculpture, but in the progress of art received their final determination from the painter: this is the praise of Parrhasius; and Praxiteles applied to Nicias for the ultimate decision and refinement of his forms.* The foot was the main medium of ancient measurement; and six feet, according to Vitruvius, became the measured length of proportion for their statues. Measure is the method of ascertaining an unknown quantity from a known one; and the proportion of the foot is subject to less variation than the head or face. Lomazzo, when he makes the foot of Hercules the seventh part of his length, and fixes ten faces as the standard of ancient proportion for a Venus, nine for a Juno, and eight for Neptune, talked from fancy, and relied on the credulity of his reader.

This relation of the foot to the whole fabric, as established by nature, the ancients regulated according to ideal or divine, and human or characteristic proportions. Of the Apollo, whose height is somewhat more than seven heads, the standing foot is three inches of a Roman palm longer than the head. The Medicean Venus, however "svelt," however small her head, has in length no more that seven heads and a half; and yet her foot measures a palm and a half, and the whole height of the figure six palms and a half.†

Of such observations on proportion it would be easier to continue a long series than to make them intelligible or useful without actual demonstration or figures. From Vitruvius

* This is a misconception: see note on *Circumlitio, ante.* — W.

† This is a great mistake — say $6\frac{1}{2}$ are equal to 65, it gives 15 for the length of the foot, or nearly one quarter of the whole height of the figure. The length of the foot of the Venus de' Medici is $9\frac{3}{8}$ inches, which, multiplied by 6, is $56\frac{1}{4}$ in., or 4 feet $8\frac{1}{4}$ in., while the whole height of the figure as it stands, and it has a slight stoop, is 4 feet $11\frac{1}{2}$ in. If standing erect, the whole height of the figure might be 5 feet 2 in. The Roman palm is 8·796 inches, or nearly 9 inches. Fuseli has, therefore, confounded a palm and half an inch with a palm and a half. — W.

with his commentators, and Leonardo da Vinci, to Albert Dürer, Lomazzo, and Jerome Cardan, from the corrected measurements of Du Fresnoy and De Piles, to Watelet, Winkelmann, and Lavater, it would be easy to show that the mass of variance, peculiarity, and contradiction greatly overbalances the coincidence of experiment and measure. "The descriptions of the proportions of the human frame," says Mengs, "are infinite, but seldom agree among themselves. Some are too obscure to give the artist a clear idea; some have too much limited the combinations which might produce, or are capable of, proportions homogeneously uniform; others, on the contrary, have, like Albert Dürer, displayed a great quantity and variety of proportions, to little purpose for any one who should not choose to imitate his taste. The ordinary method is that of dividing the figure into a fixed number of heads or faces; but this division is of more use to the sculptor than the painter, who never can see the just size of the head, because perspective hides at least a third of the upper fourth; nor does the breadth of the limbs, in painting, admit of sculpture measure, as they would appear meagre and scanty on a flat surface, in comparison of the mass they circumscribe in perspective, because the habit of looking at objects with both eyes swells their mass beyond its just diameter, in reality as well as in sculpture. This difference of limbs the ancients observed in their best basso-rilievoes; they exceed in volume the limbs of their statues. Such are the forms of the sacrificing group in the gardens of the Medicean Villa, at Rome, represented in the Admiranda of Santo Bartoli, and imitated by Raphael in the Cartoon of the Sacrifice at Lystra."

The painter is infinitely more in want of variety than the sculptor, and consequently cannot submit to the same restriction of rule. Raphael, who in a certain sense did no more than multiply the antique style of the second order, uniting it with a certain air of truth not within the reach of sculpture, whether from rule or taste, made use of every kind of proportion without a seeming predilection for any. There are figures of his which have little more than six heads and a half, such as the St. Peter in the cartoon of the Temple-gate; a proportion insufferable in any other painter but Raphael.

It is reasonable to suppose, that in endeavouring to form a

standard or a canon of proportion for the human figure, the Greeks began with the head, its form, its position, the manner in which it is attached to the trunk. They found that man alone carries his head erect, and that thence he derives a face and a countenance. Of all the brute creation, what is called the head is only an extremity of the horizontal body, whose under parts are shoved forward to seek food or seize prey; front and upper part are driven back, are shortened, and, in more than one genus, hardly perceivable. The more the brute is raised before and erects the neck, the more it gains variety of aspect; still it hangs forward, an appendix to the trunk: it cannot be properly said to have a head; the etymology of the word implies an erect position. A head, strictly speaking, is the prerogative of a man, formed beneath a skull which rounds the forehead and determines the face. The more the front recedes and inclines to the horizontal, so much the nearer a head approaches the form of a brute; the more it inclines to the perpendicular, the more it gains of man. This observation has been demonstrated in the least fallible manner by Camper*, the anatomist, who, by a contrivance equally ingenious and unequivocal, appears to have ascertained, not only the difference of the *faceal* in animals, but that which discriminates nations. Placing the skull or head to be measured into a kind of sash or frame, pierced at equidistant intervals to admit the plummet and horizontal and perpendicular threads, he draws a straight line from the aperture of the ear to the under part of the nose, and another from the utmost projection of the frontal bone to the most prominent part of the upper jaw. The whole is divided into ninety, or even one hundred degrees, from the actual maximum and minimum of nature to those of art. Birds describe the smallest angles, which widen in proportion as the animal approaches the human form: the heads of apes reach from forty-two to fifty degrees, which last approaches man. The Negro and Kalmuck reach seventy; the European eighty; the ancient Roman artists ascended to ninety-five; the Greeks raised the ideal *from ninety* to one hundred degrees. What goes beyond this line becomes portentous; the head appears misshapen, and assumes the appearance of a hydrocephalus. It is the limit set by art, and established

* *Discours, &c.* Utrecht, 1792. — W.

on this physical principle; that the more the form of the head reclines to the horizontal or overshoots the given perpendicular, the more the maxillæ are protruded or the more the front, the less it retains of the true human form, and degenerates into brute or monster.

From a head so determined, arose an harmonious system of features. Under a front as full as open, the frontal muscles assumed the seat of meaning; the cavity of the eyes became deeper, and took a regular and equal distance from the centre of the nose, a feature of which few of the moderns ever had a distinct idea; the mouth and lips were shaped for organs of command and persuasion, rather than appetite; and the apodosis of the whole, resolution and support, was given in the chin.

From a head so regulated, and placed on the most beautiful of all columns, the neck, the thinking artist could not fail to conclude to the rest of the body. As the under parts of the head were subordinate to the front, so was the lower part of the torso to the breast. The organs of mere nutrition, or appetite, and secretion, receded and were subjected to the nobler seats of action and vigour. Such harmony of system was not only the result of numeric proportion, of length and breadth of parts; it was the conception of one indivisibly connected whole, variously uniform — god, goddess, hero, heroine, male, female, infancy, youth, virility, and age, majesty, energy, agility, beauty, character, and passions, directed the method of treatment, and formed STYLE.

The sculptured monuments left by the ancients, that have escaped the wreck of time, and compose the magnificent collections of the Academy and the Museum, amply prove that these assertions are not the visionary brood of fancy and sanguine wishes, whilst they offer to the student advantages which, perhaps, no ancient, certainly no modern schools ever could or can offer to theirs, not even that of formerly the real and still the nominal metropolis of art — Rome.

These monuments may be aptly divided into three classes —

1st. Imitations, not seldom transcripts of *Essential Nature.*

2nd. Homogeneous delineations of *Character;* and,

3rd. The highest and last — *Ideal* Figures.

The first shows to advantage what exists or existed; the second collects, in one individual, what is scattered in his

class; the third subordinates existence and character to beauty and sublimity.

The astonishing remains of gods, demigods, and heroes treasured in the Museum, from the Parthenon and the Temple of Phigalia, constitute the first epoch. They establish the elements of proportion; they show what is essential in the composition and construction of the human frame. The artist's principle remained, however, negative; he understood the best he saw, but did not attempt to add, or conclude from what was, to what might be. These works are commonly considered as the produce of the school of Phidias, and the substantiation of his principles: if they are, and there can be little doubt but they are, it must be owned that the eulogies lately lavished on them, as presenting, even on their mutilated and battered surfaces, more of the real texture of the human frame, a better discrimination of bone, muscle, and tendon than most of the works ascribed to more advanced periods, little agree with the verdict of the ancients, as pronounced by Pliny, on the real character of Phidias, the architect of gods, fitter to frame divinities than men, and leave him little more share in the formation of our figures than the conception. In beholding them, we say such is man, real unsophisticated man — man warm from the hand of nature, but not yet distinguished by her endless variety and difference of character. The Dioscuri of the Quirinal*, the Lapithæ in conflict with the Centaurs from the Parthenon, and the heroes from the fabric of Ictinus, are brothers, and only differ in size and finish; whilst the Panathenaic processions offer the unvaried transcript of Athenian youth.

Delineation of character forms the second class of the figures in our possession, and the distinguishing feature of its artists. They found that, as *all* were connected by the genus and a central principle of form, so they were divided into classes, and from each other separated by an individual stamp, by *character*. To unite this with the simplicity of the *generic* principle was their aim; the symmetry prescribed by general proportion was modified and adapted, not sacrificed to the demands of the peculiar quality which distinguished the attribute they undertook to personify. Thus, the Hercules of Glycon, though the symbol of absolute, irre-

* The figures of Monte Cavallo at Rome.— W.

sistible, and uniform strength, appears to be swift as a stag, and elastic like a ball; and thus Agasias, the author of what the barbarity of custom still continues to misname the "Fighting Gladiator," though its style, evidently Iconic (?), be more connected with individual than generic nature, has spread over its whole the rapidity of lightning, and substantiated in its *motion* all Homer says of Hector rushing through the shattered portals of the Grecian wall — that, at that instant, nothing could have stopped him but a god.

The wounded Cornicularius, known by the name of the Dying Gladiator, the Savage whetting his knife to excoriate Marsyas, the enraged Shepherd Boy ludicrously transformed to a young Patroclus, are too undisguised portraits to deserve being ranked with this higher class of characteristic delineation. We with more exultation subjoin to it the Pathetic Groups which, to the historic artist, at once disclose the whole *extent* and *limits* of dramatic composition — the agonies of Niobe and her Progeny; the pangs of the Laocoon; Menelaus raising Patroclus, slain by Hector; the Warrior who deserves to be called Hæmon, with Antigone, self-slain, hanging on his arm; the softer and more familiar expression of Æthra and Theseus, maternal inquiry and filial simplicity; Orestes and Pylades pouring libations to Agamemnon's shade; Venus expostulating with Amor; Amor embracing Psyche: works of different periods and different styles, but true to the same unerring principles — principles not abandoned in the lascivious dream of the Hermaphrodite, the gross sonorous repose of the Faun, and the tottering inebriety of Hercules.

The artists of the third epoch concluded from existence to possibility. The simple purity of the first, and the energetic harmonious variety of the second period, were its bases; it amalgamated their artless angular line and rigid precision with the suavity of undulating contours, elegance of attitude, the soft inflexions of flesh: and created a standard of ideal beauty which regulated the whole, from the most prominent, conspicuous, and interesting, to the most remote and minute parts. The Apollo, the Venus, the Torso, arose to prove that in the same degree as in an image of art the idea of *simplicity*, or of *one*, predominates, it will partake of *grandeur;* and that in the degree as the idea of *variety* prevails,

it will partake of *beauty:* variety leads to simplicity in images of beauty, simplicity to variety in images of grandeur, and the union of both produces the sublime.

Such are the splendid, and I repeat it, unparalleled advantages that surround you; but lest, by their specious display, I should be suspected of more enthusiasm than becomes the sober office of a teacher, and you be led to delusive expectations and false conclusions, remember that, though even the best directed labour cannot supply what nature has refused, still it remains an experiment uniformly sanctioned by time, that without unwearied toil, obstinate perseverance, and submissive resignation, neither the theory nor the practice of the art can be fully acquired, and that without them genius is a bubble and talent a trifle.

And now permit me to finish this fragment of observations on Design with a few remarks on our mutual situation, as teachers and as pupils of this Institution: if the advancement of art be the cause and the ultimate aim of its foundation.

When in recommending the antique as the student's guide in copying the life, I comparatively might have seemed to depreciate the servile adherence to the model, I was perfectly aware that the use of life alone can supply the artist with the real expression, and consequently the real appearances of bones and muscles in varied action. It will not be suspected, I trust, that I meant to recommend the frigid introduction of that marble style, that pedantic stiffness, which, under the abused name of correctness, frequently disfigures the labours of those who, at too late a period for successful attempts at changing their manner, abjure or lose the courage to use what they had learnt before, and content themselves with being the tame transcribers of the dead letter, instead of the spirit of the ancients, and importers of nothing but forms and attitudes of stone.

It is to life we must recur, — to warm, fleshy, genial life, — for animated forms. To nature and life Zeuxis applied, to embody the forms of Polycletus and Alcamenes: and what was the prerogative of Lysippus, but to give the air, the "morbidezza," the soft transitions, the illusions of palpitating life, to bronze and marble? The pedantry of geometrically *straight* lines is not only no idealism, it is a solecism in

nature. *Organisation*, your object, is inseparable from *life; motion* from organisation: where organisation and life are, there is a seat of life, a *punctum saliens*, acting through veins and branching arteries, consequently with *pulsation*, and by that, undulating and rounding the passages of parts to parts. Of the milliards of commas, or points, that nature mediately or immediately produces, no two are alike: how, then, could she produce straight lines, which are all similar, and by their nature cut, divide, interrupt, destroy?

The province delegated by the Academy to its teachers must be,—where hope promises success and sparks of genius appear, to foster, to encourage; but where necessity commands, rather to deter than to delude, and thus to check the progress of that compendiary method, which, according to your late president, has ruined the arts of every country, by reducing execution to a recipè, substituting manner for style, ornament for substance, and giving admission to mediocrity.

If the students of this Academy must be supposed to have overcome the rudiments, and to be arrived at that point from which it may be discovered whether nature intended them for mere craftsmen or real artists, near that point where, in the phrase of Reynolds, "genius begins and rules end," it behoves us not to mistake the mere children of necessity, or the pledges of vanity, for the real nurslings of public hope, or the future supporters of the beneficent establishment that rears them. Instruction, it is true, may put them in possession of every attainable part of the Art in a decent degree; they may learn to draw with tolerable correctness, to colour with tolerable effect, to put their figures together tolerably well, and to furnish their faces with a tolerable expression — it may not be easy for any one to pick any thing intolerably bad out of their works; but when they have done all this—and almost all may do all this, for all this may be taught—they will find themselves exactly at the point where all that gives value to Art begins — Genius, which cannot be taught—at the threshold of the Art, in a state of mediocrity. "Gods, men, and fame," says Horace, "reject mediocrity in Poets." Why? Neither Poetry nor Painting spring from the necessities of society, or furnish necessaries to life; offsprings of fancy, leisure,

and lofty contemplation, organs of religion and government, ornaments of society, and too often mere charms of the senses and instruments of luxury, they derive their excellence from novelty, degree, and polish. What none indispensably want, all may wish for, but few only are able to procure, acquires its value from some exclusive quality, founded on intrinsic or some conventional merit, and that, or an equal substitute, mediocrity cannot reach: hence, by suffering it to invade the province of genius and talent, we rob the plough, the shop, the loom, the school, perhaps the desk and pulpit, of a thousand useful hands. A good mechanic, a trusty labourer, an honest tradesman, are beings more important, of greater use to society, and better supporters of the state, than an artist or a poet of mediocrity. When I therefore say that it is the duty of the Academy to deter rather than to delude, I am not afraid of having advanced a paradox hostile to the progress of real art. The capacities that time will disclose, genius and talents, cannot be deterred by the exposition of difficulties, and it is the interest of society that all else should.

Lecture XI. — On the prevailing Method of treating the History of Painting, with Observations on the Picture of "The Last Supper," by Leonardo da Vinci.

In this lecture I shall submit to your consideration some criticisms on the prevailing method of treating the history of our art; attended by a series of observations on the magnificent picture of the Last Supper, by Leonardo da Vinci, now before you. *

History, mindless of its real object, sinking to biography, has been swelled into a diffuse catalogue of individuals, who, tutored by different schools, or picking something from the

* That is the copy of it in the Academy made by Marco d' Oggione, about the year 1510, for the refectory of the Carthusian convent at Pavia. Bossi, *Del Cenacolo di Leonardo da Vinci;* Goethe, *Propylæen;* and the editor's *Epochs of Painting*, p. 219. ff. — W.

real establishers of art, have done little more than repeat, or imitate through the medium of either, what those had found in nature, discriminated, selected, and applied to art, according to her dictates. Without wishing to depreciate the merit of that multitude who felt, proved themselves strong enough, and strenuously employed life to follow, it must be pronounced below the historian's dignity to allow them more than a transitory glance. Neither originality, nor selection and combination of materials scattered over the various classes of art by others, have much right to attention from him who only investigates the real progress of art, if the first proves to have added nothing essential to the system by novelty, and the second to have only diluted energy, and by a popular amalgama to have pleased the vulgar. Novelty, without enlarging the circle of knowledge, may delight or strike, but is nearer allied to whim than to invention; and an eclectic system, without equality of parts, as it originated in want of comprehension, totters on the brink of mediocrity.

The first ideas of expression, character, form, chiaroscuro, and colour, originated in Tuscany: Masaccio, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Bartolomeo della Porta. The first was carried off before he could give more than hints of dramatic composition; the second appears to have established character on physiognomy, and to have seen the first vision of chiaroscuro, though he did not penetrate the full extent of its charm; the third had power, knowledge, and life sufficiently great, extensive, and long, to have fixed style on its basis, had not an irresistible bias drawn off his attention from the modesty and variety of nature; Baccio gave amplitude to drapery and colour to form.

Of the Tuscan school that succeeded these, the main body not only added nothing to their discoveries, but, if their blind attachment to the singularities rather than the beauties of the third be excepted, equally inattentive to expression, character, propriety of form, the charms of chiaroscuro, and energies of colour, contented themselves to give to tame or puerile ideas, obvious and commonplace conceptions, a kind of importance by mastery of execution and a bold but monotonous and always mannered outline; and though Andrea del Sarto, with Francia Bigio, Giacopo da Pontormo, and Il Rosso, may be allowed to have thought sometimes for themselves and struck out

paths of their own, will it be asserted that they enlarged or even filled the circle traced out before? The most characteristic work of Andrea's original powers, is, no doubt, the historic series in San Giovanni dei Scalzi; yet, when compared with the patriarchal simplicity of the groups in the Lunette of the Sistine Chapel, the *naïveté* of his characters and imagery will be found too much tainted with contemporary, local, and domestic features, for divine, apostolic, and oriental agents. His drapery, whenever he escapes from the costume of the day, combines with singular felicity the breadth of the *Frati**, and the acute angles of Albert Dürer; but neither its amplitude, nor the solemn repose and tranquillity of his scenery, can supply the want of personal dignity, or consecrate vulgar forms and trivial features.

The Roman school, like an oriental sun, rose, not announced by dawn, and, setting, left no twilight. Raphael established his school on the drama; its scenery, its expression, its forms; history, lyrics, portrait, became under his hand the organs of passion and character. With his demise the purity of this principle vanished. Julio Romano, too original to adopt, formed a school of his own at Mantua, which, as it was founded on no characteristic principle, added nothing to art, and did not long survive its founder. Polidoro Caldara was more ambitious to emulate the forms of the antique than to propagate the style of his master, which was not comprehended by Penni, called Il Fattore, mangled by Pierino del Vaga, became commonplace in the hands of the Zuccheri, barbarous manner during the usurpation of Giuseppe Cesari, sunk to tameness in the timid imitation of Sacchi and Maratta, and expired under the frigid method of Mengs.

A certain national, though original character, marks the brightest epoch of the Venetian school. However deviating from each other, Titian, Tintoretto, Jacopo da Ponte, and Paolo Veronese, acknowledge but one element of imitation, Nature herself: this principle each bequeathed to his school, and no attempt to adulterate its simplicity by uniting different methods, distinguishes their immediate successors: hence they preserved features of originality longer than the sur-

* Literally the *Friars*; it is not obvious what Fuseli means; perhaps it should be *Frate*, which might be an allusion to Fra Bartolomeo, who was frequently called Il Frate. — W.

rounding schools, whom the vain wish to connect incompatible excellence, soon degraded to mediocrity, and from that plunged to insignificance.

If what is finite could grasp infinity, the variety of nature might be united by individual energy ; till then the attempt to amalgamate her scattered beauties by the imbecility of art, will prove abortive. Genius is the pupil of nature; perceives, is dazzled, and imperfectly transmits one of her features : thus saw Michelangelo, Raphael, Titian, Correggio; and such were their technic legacies, as inseparable from their attendant flaws, as in equal degrees irreconcilable. That nature is not subject to decrepitude, is proved by the superiority of modern over ancient science; what hinders modern art to equal that of classic eras, is the effect of irremovable causes.

But I hasten to the principal object of this lecture, the consideration of the technic character of Leonardo da Vinci, one, and in my opinion, the first, of the great restorers of modern art, as deduced from his most important work, the Last Supper, surviving as a whole in the magnificent copy of Marco d'Oggione, rescued from a random pilgrimage by the courage and vigilance of our president, and by the Academy made our own. The original of this work, the ultimate test of his most vigorous powers, the proof of his theory, and what may be called with propriety the first characteristic composition since the revival of the art, was the principal ornament of the refectory in the Dominican Convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie, at Milan.

Let us begin with the centre, the seat of the principal figure, from which all the rest emanate like rays. Sublimely calm, the face of the Saviour broods over the immense *, whilst every face and every limb around him, roused by his mysterious word, fluctuate in restless curiosity and sympathetic pangs.

The face of the Saviour is an abyss of thought, and broods over the immense revolution in the economy of mankind, which throngs inwardly on his absorbed eye — as the spirit creative in the beginning over the water's darksome wave — undisturbed and quiet. It could not be lost in the copy

* The subject here apparently wanting is supplied by Fuseli himself a few lines lower. — W.

before us: how could its sublime conception escape those who saw the original? It has survived the hand of time in the study which Leonardo made in crayons, exhibited with most of the attendant heads in the British Gallery; and even in the feebler transcript of Pietro Testa.

I am not afraid of being under the necessity of retracting what I am going to advance, that neither during the splendid period immediately subsequent to Leonardo, nor in those which succeeded to our own time, has a face of the Redeemer been produced which, I will not say equalled, but approached the sublimity of Leonardo's conception, and in quiet and simple features of humanity, embodied divine, or, what is the same, incomprehensible and infinite powers. To him who could contrive and give this combination, the unlimited praise lavished on the inferior characters who surround the hero, whilst his success in that was doubted — appears to me not only no praise, but a gross injustice.

Yet such was the judgment of Vasari, and in our days of Lanzi, both founded on the pretended impossibility of transcribing the beauty of forms and the varied energies of expression distributed by the artist among the disciples. "The moment," says Lanzi, and says well, "is that in which the Saviour says to the disciples, 'One of you will betray me!' On every one of the innocent men the word acts like lightning: he who is at a greater distance, distrusting his own ears, applies to his neighbour; others, according to their variety of character, betray raised emotions. One of them faints, one is fixed in astonishment: this wildly rises, the simple candour of another tells that he cannot be suspected: Judas, meanwhile, assumes a look of intrepidity, but, though he counterfeits innocence, leaves no doubt of being the traitor. Leonardo used to tell, that for a year he wandered about, perplexed with the thought how to embody in one face the image of so black a soul; and frequenting a street which a variety of villains haunted, he met at last, by the help of some associated features, with his man. Nor was his success less conspicuous in furnishing the two Jameses with congenial and characteristic beauty; but being unable to find an ideal superior to theirs for Christ, he left the head, as Vasari affirms, imperfect; though Armenini ascribes the highest finish even to that."*

* *Storia Pittorica*, &c. vol. iv. p. 158. — W.

Thus is the modesty and diffidence of the artist, who, in the midst of the most glorious success, always sought and wished for more, brought as evidence against him by all his pretended judges and critics, if we except the single Bottari, who finds in it, with the highest finish, all the fortitude of mind characteristic of the Saviour, united to lively consideration of the suffering that awaited him — though even that is, in my opinion, below the conception of Leonardo.

Lest those who have read and recollect the character of Leonardo which I have submitted to the public *, should, from the predilection with which I have dwelt on what I think the principal feature of his performance, the face and attitude of the hero, suspect I shift my ground, or charge me with inconsistency, I repeat what I said then, when I was nearly unacquainted with this work, that the distinguishing feature of his powers lay in the delineation of character, which he often raised to a species, and not seldom degraded to caricature. The triumphant proof of both is the great performance before us; the same mind that could unite divine power with the purest humanity, by an unaccountable dereliction, not only of the dignity due to his subject, but of sound sense, thought it not beneath him to haunt the recesses of deformity to unkennel a villain. Did he confine villany to deformity? If he had, he would have disdained to give him two associates in feature; for the face of him who holds up his finger, and his who argues on the left extremity of the table, seem to have proceeded, if not absolutely from the same, from a very similar mould, yet they are in the number of the elect, and, though on the brink of caricature, have the air of good men. Expression alone separates them from the traitor, whom incapacity of remorse, hatred, rage at being discovered, and habitual meanness, seem to have divided into equal shares.

The portrait of Cesare Borgia, by Giorgione, now hung up for your study in the Academy for Painting, proves that the most atrocious mind may lurk under good, sedate, and even handsome features. Though his hand were not drawing a dagger, who would expect mercy or remorse from the evil methodised villany of that eye? But Judas was capable of remorse; intolerant of the dreadful suffering with which

* In his second Lecture, published in 1801. — W.

the horrid act had overwhelmed him, he rushed on confession of his crime, restitution, and suicide.

To the countenance and attitude of St. John, blooming with youth, innocent, resigned, partaking perhaps somewhat too much of the feminine, and those of the two Jameses invigorated by the strength of virility, energetic, and bold, none will refuse a competent praise of varied beauty; but they neither are nor ought to be ideal, and had they been so, they could neither compete nor interfere with the sublimity that crowns the Saviour's brow, and stamps his countenance with the God.

The felicity, novelty, and propriety of Leonardo's conception and invention, are powerfully seconded by every part of execution: — the tone which veils and wraps actors and scene into one harmonious whole, and gives it breadth; the style of design, grand without affectation, and, if not delicate or ideal, characteristic of the actors; the draperies folded with equal simplicity, elegance, and costume, with all the propriety of presenting the highest finish, without anxiety of touch, or thronging the eye.

So artless is the assemblage of the figures, that the very name of composition seems to degrade what appears arranged by nature's own hand. That the nearest by relation, characters, and age should be placed nearest the master of the feast, and of course attract the eye soonest, was surely the most natural arrangement; but if they are conspicuous, they are not so at the expense of the rest: distance is compensated by action; the centre leads to all, as all lead to the centre. That the great restorer of light and shade sacrificed the effects and charms of *chiaroscuro* at the shrine of character, raised him at once above all his future competitors; changes admiration to sympathy, and makes us partners of the feast.

As expression sprang from the subject, so it gave rise to competition. That Raphael was acquainted with Leonardo's work, and felt its power, is evident from his composition, engraved by Marc Antonio: finding invention anticipated, he took refuge in imitation, and filled it with sentiments of his own; whether, beyond the dignity of attitude, he attempts to approach the profundity of Leonardo's Christ, cannot, from a print of very moderate dimensions, be decided. In the listening figure of Judas, with equal atrocity of guilt he

appears to have combined somewhat more of apostolic consequence.

The well-known Last Supper of the Loggia, painted, or what is more probable, superintended by Raphael, is, by being made a night scene, by contrast and chiaroscuro, become an original conception; but as it presents little more than groups busy to arrange themselves for sitting down or breaking up, it cannot excite more interest than what is due to contrast and effect, and active groups eager to move, yet not tumultuary.

But if Leonardo disdained to consult the recesses of composition and the charms of artificial chiaroscuro, he did not debase his work to mere apposition: uniting the whole by tone, he gave it substance by truth of imitation, and effect by the disposition of the characters; the groups flanking each side of the Saviour, emerge, recede, and support each other with a roundness, depth, and evidence which leave all attempts at emendation or improvement hopeless. But why should I attempt to enumerate beauties which are before you, and which if you do not perceive yourselves, no words of mine can ever make you feel?

The universality of Leonardo da Vinci is become proverbial; but though possessed of every element, he rather gave glimpses than a standard of form; though full of energy, he had not powers effectually to court the various graces he pursued. His line was free from meagreness, and his forms presented volume, but he appears not to have ever been much acquainted, or to have sedulously sought much acquaintance, with the antique. Character was his favourite study, and character he has often raised from an individual to a species, and as often depressed to caricature. The strength of his execution lay in the delineation of male heads; those of his females owe nearly all their charms to chiaroscuro, of which he is the supposed inventor: they are seldom more discriminated than the children they fondle; they are sisters of one family. The extremities of his hands are often inelegant, though timorously drawn, like those of Christ among the Doctors in the picture we lately saw exhibited.* Leonardo da Vinci touched in every muscle of his forms the master-key of the passion he wished to express, but he is ideal only in chiaroscuro.

* Now in the National Gallery. — W.

Such was the state of the art before the appearance of Michelangelo and Raphael, and the establishment of style.

Of Michelangelo it is difficult to decide who have understood less, his encomiasts or his critics, though both rightly agree in dating from him an epoch — those of the establishment, these of the subversion of art.

It is the lot of genius to be opposed, and to be invigorated by opposition. All extremes touch each other: frigid praise and frigid censure wait on easily attainable or common powers; but the successful adventurer in the realms of discovery, in spite of the shrugs, checks, and sneers of the timid, the malign, and the envious, leaps on an unknown or long-lost shore, ennobles it with his name, and grasps immortality.

Michelangelo appeared, and soon discovered that works worthy of perpetuity could neither be built on defective and unsubstantial forms, nor on the transient whim of fashion and local sentiment; that their stamina were the real stamina of nature, the genuine feelings of humanity; and planned for painting what Homer had planned for poetry, the epic part, which, with the utmost simplicity of a whole, should unite magnificence of plan and endless variety of subordinate parts. His line became generic, but perhaps too uniformly grand: character and beauty were admitted only as far as they could be made subservient to grandeur. The child, the female, meanness, deformity, were by him indiscriminately stamped with grandeur. A beggar rose from his hand the patriarch of poverty; the hump of his dwarf is impressed with dignity; his women are moulds of generation; his infants teem with the man; his men are a race of giants. This is the "terribil via," this is that "magic circle" in which we are told that none durst move but he. No, none but he who makes sublimity of conception his element of form. Michelangelo himself offers the proof: for the lines that bear in a mass on his mighty tide of thought in the Gods and Patriarchs and Sibyls of the Sistine Chapel, already too ostentatiously show themselves in the Last Judgment, and rather expose than support his ebbing powers in the Chapel of Paul.* Considered as a

* These are the frescoes of the Cappella Paolina, in the Vatican, executed for Paul III. after the completion of the "Last Judgment," when Michelangelo was upwards of seventy years of age. — W.

whole, the Crucifixion of St. Peter and the Conversion of Paul, in that place, are the dotage of Michelangelo's style; but they have parts which make that dotage more enviable than the equal vigour of mediocrity.

With what an eye Michelangelo contemplated the antique, we may judge from his Bacchus, the early production of his youth: in style it is at least equal, perhaps in pulp and fleshiness superior, to what is called the antique Roman style.* His idea seems to have been the personification of youthful inebriety, but it is the inebriety of a superior being, not yet forsaken by grace, not yet relinquished by mind. In more advanced years, the Torso of Apollonius became his standard of form. But the Demons of Dante had too early tinctured his fancy to admit in their full majesty the Gods of Homer and of Phidias.

Such was the opinion formed of the plan and style of Michelangelo by the judges, the critics, the poets, the artists, the public, of his own and the following age, from Bembo to Ariosto, from Raphael to Titian, down to Agostino and Annibale Carracci. Let us now compare it with the technical verdict given by the greatest professional critic, on the Continent, of our times. "Michelangelo," says Mengs, "seeking always to be grand, was perhaps only bulky, and by the perpetual use of a convex line, overspanned the forms and irrecoverably lost the line of nature. This charged style attended him in his youth, and engrossed him when a man. For this reason his works will always be much inferior to the antique of the good style; for though they made robust and muscular figures, they never made them heavy: — an instance is the Hercules of Glycon, who, though so bulky, and of form so majestic, is easily seen to be swift like a stag, and elastic like a ball. The style of Michelangelo could not give similar ideas, for the joints of his figures are too contracted, and seem only made for the posture into which he puts them. The forms of his flesh are too round, his muscles of a mass and shape always similar, which hides their springs of motion; nor do you ever see in his works a muscle in repose, than which a greater fault design knows not. He

* That is, the style of the Empire, the style of the Decline. This Bacchus is now in the Florentine gallery Degli Uffizj. — W.

perfectly knew what place each muscle ought to occupy, but never gave its form. Nor did he understand the nature of tendons, as he made them equally fleshy from end to end, and his bones too round. Raphael partook of all these defects, without ever reaching the profundity of his muscular theory. Raphael's strength lay in characterising aged and nervous frames; he was too hard for delicacy, and in figures of grandeur an exaggerated copy of Michelangelo." So far Mengs.

Michelangelo appears to have had no infancy; if he had, we are not acquainted with it. His earliest works are equal in principle and compass of execution to the vigorous proofs of his virility.* Like an oriental sun, he burst upon us at once, without a dawn. Raffaello Sanzio we see in his cradle, we hear him stammer, but *propriety* rocked the cradle, and *character* formed his lips. Even in the trammels of Pietro Perugino, dry and servile in his style of design, he traced what was essential, and separated it from what was accidental in his model. The works of Leonardo da Vinci and the Cartoon of Pisa are said to have invigorated his eye, but it was the antique that completed the system which he had begun to establish on nature; from them he learned discrimination and choice of forms. He found that in the construction of the body the articulations of the bones were the true cause of ease and grace in the action of the limbs, and that the knowledge of this was the reason of the superiority of antique design. He found that certain features were fittest for certain expressions, and peculiar to certain characters; that such a head, such hands, such feet, are the stamen or the growth of such a body, and on physiognomy established homogeneousness. Of all artists he was the greatest, the most precise, the most acute observer. When he designed, he first attended to the primary intention and motive of his figure, next to its general measure, then to the bones and their articulations; from them to the principal muscles, or the muscles eminently wanted, and their attendant nerves, and at last to the more or less essential minutiæ. But the characteristic part of the subject is infallibly the charac-

* His first essay in fresco is his greatest — the vault of the Sistine Chapel; but when he completed this work he had already attained the age at which Raphael died, thirty-seven. — W.

teristic part of his design, if it be formed even by a few rapid or a single stroke of his pen or pencil. The strokes themselves are characteristic, they follow or indicate the texture or fibre of the part; flesh in their rounding, nerves in straight, bones in angular touches.

Such was the felicity and such the propriety of Raphael when employed in the dramatic evolutions of character,— both suffered when he attempted to abstract the forms of sublimity or beauty. The painter of humanity not often wielded with success superhuman weapons. His Gods never rose above prophetic or patriarchal forms: if the finger of Michelangelo impressed the divine countenance oftener with sternness than awe, the Gods of Raphael are sometimes too affable and mild, like him who speaks to Jacob in the ceiling of the Vatican; sometimes too violent, like him who separates light from darkness in the Loggia: but though made chiefly to walk with dignity on earth, he soared above it in the mild effulgence and majestic rapture of Christ on Tabor (not indeed as we see his face now from the repairs of the manufacturers in the Louvre), and still more in the frown of the angelic countenance that withers all the strength of the warrior Heliodorus. Of ideal female beauty, though he himself, in his letter to Count Castiglione*, tells us that from its scarcity in life he made attempts to reach it by an idea formed in his own mind, he certainly wanted that standard which guided him in character. His Goddesses and mythologic females are no more than aggravations of the generic forms of Michelangelo. Roundness, mildness, sanctimony, and insipidity, compose the features and air of his Madonnas: transcripts of the nursery, or some favourite face. The Madonna del Impanato, the Madonna Bella, the Madonna della Sedia, and even the longer proportions and greater delicacy and dignity of the Madonna formerly in the collection of Versailles, share more or less of this insipidity: it chiefly arises from the high, smooth, roundish forehead, the shaven vacuity between the arched semicircular eye-brows, their elevation above the eyes, and the ungraceful division, growth and scantiness of hair. This indeed might be the result of his desire not to stain the virgin character of sanctity with the most distant hint of

* See note, *ante*, to Barry's Third Lecture. — W

coquetry or meretricious charms; for in his Magdalens, he throws it with luxuriant profusion, and surrounds the breast and shoulders with undulating waves and plaits of gold. The character of Mary Magdalen met his,—it was the character of a passion.

It is evident from every picture or design at every period of his art in which she had a part, that he supposed her enamoured when she follows the body of the Saviour to the tomb, or throws herself dishevelled over his feet, or addresses him when he bears his cross. The cast of her features, her forms, her action, are the character of love in agony. When character inspired Raphael, his women became definitions of grace and pathos at once.

Such is the exquisite line and turn of the averted half-kneeling female with the two children among the spectators of Heliodorous. Her attitude, the turn of her neck, supplies all face, and intimates more than he ever expressed by features; and that she would not have gained by showing them, may be guessed from her companion on the foreground, who, though highly elegant and equally pathetic in her action, has not features worthy of either. The fact is, form and style were by Raphael employed chiefly, if not always, as vehicles of character and pathos; the drama is his element, and to that he has adapted them in a mode and with a propriety which leave all attempts at emendation hopeless: if his lines have been excelled or rivalled in energy, correctness, elegance,—considered as instruments of the passions, they have never been equalled, and as parts of invention, composition, and expression relative to his story, have never been approached.

The result of these observations on Michelangelo and Raphael is this, that Michelangelo drew in generic forms the human race; that Raphael drew the forms and characters of society diversified by artificial wants.

We find therefore Michelangelo more sublime, and we sympathise more with Raphael, because he resembles us more. When Reynolds said that Michelangelo had more *imagination*, and Raphael more *fancy*, he meant to say, that the one had more sublimity, more elementary fire; the other was richer in social imagery, in genial conceits, and artificial variety. Simplicity is the stamen of Michelangelo; varied propriety, with character, that of Raphael.

Of the great restorers of art, the two we have considered, made design and style the basis of their plan, content with negative and unambitious colour; the two next inverted the principle, and employed design and style as vehicles of *colour* or of *harmony*.

The style of Titian's design has two periods: he began with copying what was before him without choice, and for some time continued in the meagre, anxious, and accidental manner of Giovanni Bellini; but discovering in the works of Giorgione that breadth of form produced breadth of colour, he endeavoured, and succeeded, to see Nature by comparison, and in a more ample light. That he possessed the theory of the human body, needs not to be proved from the doubtful designs which he is said to have made for the anatomical work of Vesalio; that he had familiarised himself with the style of Michelangelo, and burned with ambition to emulate it, is less evident from adopting some of his attitudes in the pictures of Pietro Martire and the Battle of Ghiaradadda, than from the elemental conceptions, the colossal style, and daring foreshortenings which astonish in the Cain and Abel, the Abraham and Isaac, the Goliah and David, on the ceiling of the fabric of Santo Spirito at Venice.* Here, and here alone, is the result of that union of tone and style which, in Tintoretto's opinion, was required to make a perfect painter,—for in general the male forms of Titian are those of sanguine health, often too fleshy for character, less elastic than muscular, or vigorous without grandeur. His females are the fair dimpled Venetian race, soft, without delicacy, too full for elegance, for action too plump; his infants are poised between both, and preferable to either. In portrait he has united character and resemblance with dignity, and still remains unrivalled.

A certain national character marks the brightest æra of the Venetian school: however deviating from each other, Titian, Tintoretto, Bassan, and Paolo, acknowledged but one element of imitation, Nature herself. This principle each bequeathed to his followers; and no attempt to adulterate its simplicity, by uniting different methods, distinguished their immediate successors. Hence they preserved features of

* Now in the church of Santa Maria della Salute. — W.

originality longer than the surrounding schools, whom the vain wish to connect incompatible excellence soon degraded to mediocrity, and from that plunged to insignificance.*

The soft transitions from the convex to the concave line, which connect grandeur with lightness, form the style of Correggio; but using their coalition without balance, merely to obtain a breadth of demi-tint and uninterrupted tones of harmony, he became, from excess of roundness, oftener heavy than light, and frequently incorrect.

It is not easy, from the unaccountable obscurity in which his life is involved, to ascertain whether he saw the antique in sufficient degrees of quantity or beauty; but he certainly must have been familiar with modelling, and the helps of sculpture, to plan with such boldness, and conquer with such ease, the unparalleled difficulties of his foreshortenings. His grace is oftener beholden to convenience of place than elegance of line. The most appropriate, the most elegant attitudes were adopted, rejected, perhaps sacrificed to the most awkward ones, in compliance with his imperious principle: parts vanished, were absorbed, or emerged in obedience to it.

The Danaë†, of which we have seen duplicates, the head excepted, he seems to have painted from an antique female torso. But ideal beauty of face, if ever he conceived, he never has expressed; his beauty is equally remote from the idea of the Venus, the Niobe, and the best forms of nature. The Magdalen, in the picture of San Girolamo at Parma, is beholden for the charms of her face to chiaroscuro, and that incomparable hue and suavity of bloom which scarcely permit us to discover the defects of forms not much above the vulgar. But that he sometimes reached the sublime, by hiding the limits of his figures in the bland medium which inwraps them, his Jupiter and Io prove.‡

* See *ante*, on the eclecticism of the Carracci, Lecture II. — W.

† This Danaë was formerly in the possession of Queen Christine. of Sweden, whither it was taken, as part of the plunder of Prague, during the thirty years' war. Queen Christine carried it with her to Rome: it passed subsequently into the possession of the Duke of Orleans, and from his collection came to this country, when it was finally obtained by the Borghese family, and was again taken to Rome. — W.

‡ Now in the gallery of Berlin: its history is similar to that of the Danaë; it was mutilated by the Duke of Orleans, who cut out the original head; the present head is by Prudhon. — W.

Such were the principles on which the Tuscan, the Roman, the Venetian, and the Lombard schools established their systems of style, or rather the *manner* which, in various directions and modes of application, perverted style. Michelangelo lived to see the electric shock which his design had given to art, propagated by the Tuscan and Venetian schools, as the ostentatious vehicle of puny conceits and emblematic quibbles, or the palliative of empty pomp and degraded luxuriance of colour.

Of his imitators, the two most eminent are Pellegrino Tibaldi, called "Michelangelo riformato," by the Bolognese Eclectics, and Francesco Mazzuoli, called Parmigiano.

Pellegrino Tibaldi penetrated the technic without the moral principle of his master's style; he had often grandeur of line without sublimity of conception; hence the *manner* of Michelangelo is frequently the *style* of Pellegrino Tibaldi. Conglobation and eccentricity, an aggregate of convexities suddenly broken by rectangular, or cut by perpendicular lines, compose his system. His fame principally rests on the frescoes of the Academic Institute at Bologna, and the ceiling of the Merchants' Hall at Ancona. It is probably on the strength of those, that the Carracci, his countrymen, are said to have called him their "Michelangelo riformato,"—Michelangelo corrected. I will not do that injustice to the Carracci to suppose, that for one moment they could allude by this verdict to the ceiling and the prophets and sibyls of the Cappella Sistina; they glanced perhaps at the technic exuberance of the Last Judgment, and the senile caprices of the Cappella Paolina. These, they meant to inform us, had been pruned, regulated, and reformed by Pellegrino Tibaldi. Do his works in the Institute warrant this verdict? So far from it, that it exhibits little more than the dotage of Michelangelo. The single figures, groups, and compositions of the Institute present a singular mixture of extraordinary vigour and puerile imbecility of conception, of character and caricature, of style and manner.

The figure of Polyphemus groping at the mouth of his cave for Ulysses, and the composition of Æolus granting to Ulysses favourable winds, are striking instances of both. Than the Cyclops, Michelangelo himself never conceived a form of savage energy, provoked by sufferings and re-

venge, with attitude and limbs more in unison; whilst the God of Winds is degraded to the scanty and ludicrous semblance of Thersites, and Ulysses with his companions travestied by the semi-barbarous look and costume of the age of Constantine or Attila.

From Pellegrino Tibaldi, the Germans, Dutch, and Flemings, Hemskerk, Goltzius, and Spranger, borrowed the compendium of the great Tuscan's peculiarities, dropsied the forms of vigour, or dressed the gewgaws of children in colossal shapes.

Parmigiano poised his line between the grace of Correggio and the energy of Michelangelo, and from contrast produced elegance; but instead of making propriety her measure, degraded her to affectation. That disengaged play of delicate forms, the "sveltezza" of the Italians, is the prerogative of Parmigiano, though nearly always obtained at the expense of proportion. He conceived the variety, but not the simplicity of beauty, and drove contrast to extravagance. The figure of St. John, in the altar-piece of San Salvador at Città di Castello, now at the Marquis of Abercorn's, and known from the print of Giulio Bonasone, which less imitates than exaggerates its original in the Cartoon of Pisa, is one proof among many: his action is the accident of his attitude; he is conscious of his grandeur, and loses the fervour of the apostle in the orator.

So his celebrated Moses, if I see right, has in his forms less of grandeur than agility, in his action more passion than majesty, and loses the legislator in the savage. This figure, together with Raphael's figure of God in the Vision of Ezekiel, is said to have furnished Gray with some of the master-traits of his bard, — figures than which painting cannot produce two more dissimilar: calm, placid contemplation, and the decided burst of passion in coalition.

Whilst Michelangelo was doomed to live and brood over the perversion of *his* style, death prevented Raphael from witnessing the gradual decay of his.

Such was the state of style when, toward the decline of the sixteenth century, Lodovico Carracci, with his cousins Agostino and Annibale, founded at Bologna, on the hints caught from Pellegrino Tibaldi, that eclectic school which, by selecting the beauties, correcting the faults, supplying

the defects, and avoiding the extremes of the different styles, attempted to form a perfect system. The specious ingredients of this technic panacea have been preserved in a complimentary sonnet of Agostino Carracci, and are compounded of the design and symmetry of Raphael, the terrible manner of Michelangelo, the sovereign purity of Correggio's style, Titian's truth and nature, Tintoretto's and Paolo's vivacity and chiaroscuro, Lombardy's tone of colour, the learned invention of Primaticcio, the decorum and solidity of Pellegrino Tibaldi, and a little of Parmigiano's grace, all amalgamated by Niccolo dell' Abate.

I shall not attempt a parody of this prescription by transferring it to poetry, and prescribing to the candidate for dramatic fame the imitation of Shakspeare, Otway, Jonson, Milton, Dryden, Congreve, Racine, Addison, as amalgamated by Nicholas Rowe. Let me only ask whether such a mixture of demands ever entered with equal evidence the mind of any one artist, ancient or modern; whether, if it be granted possible that they did, they were ever balanced with equal impartiality; and grant this, whether they ever were or could be executed with equal felicity? A character of equal universal power is not a human character; and the nearest approach to perfection can only be in carrying to excellence one great quality with the least alloy of collateral defects: to attempt more will probably end in the extinction of character, and that, in mediocrity — the cypher of art.

And were the Carracci such? Separate the precept from the practice, the artist from the teacher, and the Carracci are in possession of my submissive homage. Lodovico is the inventor of that solemn hue, that sober twilight, which you have heard so often recommended as the proper tone of historic colour. Agostino, with learning, taste, and form, combined Correggiesque tints. Annibale, inferior to both in sensibility and taste, in the wide range of talent, undaunted execution, and academic prowess, left either far behind. But if he preserved the breadth of the style we speak of, he added nothing to its dignity; his pupils were inferior to *him*, and to his pupils their successors. *Style* continued to linger, with fatal symptoms of decay, in Italy; and if it survives, has not yet found a place to re-establish its powers on this side of the Alps.

Lecture XII. — On the present State of the Art and the Causes which check its Progress.

Such is the influence of the plastic arts on society, on manners, sentiments, the commodities, and the ornaments of life, that we think ourselves generally entitled to form our estimate of times and nations by its standard. As our homage attends those whose patronage reared them to a state of efflorescence or maturity, so we pass with neglect, or pursue with contempt, the age or race which want of culture or of opportunity averted from developing symptoms of a similar attachment.

A genuine perception of beauty is the highest degree of education, the ultimate polish of man; the master-key of the mind, it makes us better than we were before. Elevated or charmed by the contemplation of superior works of art, our mind passes from the images themselves to their authors, and from them to the race which reared the powers that furnish us with models of imitation or multiply our pleasures.

This inward sense is supported by exterior motives in contact with a far greater part of society, whom wants and commerce connect with the arts; for nations pay or receive tribute in proportion as their technic sense exerts itself or slumbers. Whatever is commodious, amene, or useful, depends in a great measure on the arts: dress, furniture, and habitation owe to their breath what they can boast of grace, propriety, or shape: they teach elegance to finish what necessity invented, and make us enamoured of our wants.

This benign influence infallibly spreads or diminishes in proportion as its original source, a sense of genuine beauty, flows from an ample or a scanty vein, in a clear or turbid stream. As taste is adulterated or sinks, ornament takes a meagre, clumsy, barbarous, ludicrous, or meretricious form; affectation dictates; simplicity and elegance are loaded; interest vanishes: in a short time necessity alone remains, and novelty with error go hand in hand.

These obvious observations on the importance of the arts, lead to the question so often discussed, and at no time more important than ours — on the causes that raised them at

various times, and among different nations — on the means of assisting their progress, and how to check their decay. Of much that has been said on it, much must be repeated, and something added.

The Greeks commonly lead the van of the arguments produced to answer this question. Their religious and civil establishments; their manners, games, contests of valour, and of talents; the cyclus of their mythology, peopled with celestial and heroic forms; the honours, the celebrity of artists; the serene Grecian sky, and mildness of the climate, are the causes supposed to have carried that nation within the ken of perfection.

Without refusing to each of these various advantages its share of effect, history informs us that if religion and liberty prepared a public, and spread a technic taste over all Greece, Athens and Corinth must be considered as the principal nurses of art, without whose fostering care the general causes mentioned could not have had so decided an effect; for nothing surely contributed so much to the gradual evolution of art, as that perpetual opportunity which they presented to the artist of public exhibition; the decoration of temples, halls, porticos, a succession of employments equally numerous, important, and dignified. Hence that emulation to gain the heights of art; the fervour of public encouragement, the zeal and gratitude of the artists were reciprocal: Polygnotus prepared with Cimon what Phidias with Pericles established, on public taste, — essential, characteristic, and ideal styles.

Whether human nature admitted of no more, or other causes prevented a farther evolution of powers, nothing greater did arise. Polish, elegance, and novelty supplied invention. Here is the period of decay. The art gradually sunk to mediocrity, and its final reward — indifference.

The artist and the public are ever in the strictest reciprocity. If the arts flourished nowhere as in Greece, no other nation ever interested itself with motives so pure in their establishment and progress, or allowed them so ample a compass. As long as their march was marked with such dignity, whilst their union excited admiration, commanded attachment, and led the public, they grew, they rose; but when individually to please, the artist attempted to monopolise the

interest due to art, to abstract by novelty, and to flatter the multitude, ruin followed. To prosper, the art not only must feel itself free, it ought to reign. If it be domineered over, if it follow the dictate of fashion, or a patron's whims, then is its dissolution at hand.

To attain the height of the ancient was impossible for modern art, circumscribed by narrower limits, forced to form itself rapidly, and on borrowed principles. Still it owes its origin and support to nearly similar causes. During the fourteenth, and still more in the course of the fifteenth century, so much activity, so general a predilection for art spread themselves over the greater part of Italy, that we are astonished at the farrago of various imagery produced at those periods. The artist and the art were indeed considered as little more than craftsmen and a craft; but they were indemnified for the want of honours, by the dignity of their employment, by commissions to decorate churches, convents, and public buildings.

Let no one to whom truth and its propagation are dear, believe or maintain that Christianism was inimical to the progress of arts, which probably nothing else could have revived. Nothing less than Christian enthusiasm could give that lasting and energetic impulse whose magic result we admire in the works that illustrate the period of genius and their establishment. Nor is the objection that England, France, and Germany professed Christianity, built churches and convents, and yet had no art, an objection of consequence, because it might with equal propriety be asked, why it did not appear sooner in Italy itself.* The art forms a part of

* Did art not appear soon in Italy? Art, so essentially the attendant on civilisation, could hardly appear before civilisation itself. As long as the disunion and anarchy which succeeded the ruin of the Roman empire endured, there was little opportunity for the development of the arts. We find that immediately the discovery of gunpowder and the invention of printing rendered social organization somewhat more possible and a general object of desire, the arts of design, as no inconsiderable instruments towards the promotion of this end, burst into vigour; and we find them so early as the fourteenth century a principal source of popular instruction in Italy, and one of the chief links of union between the people and their governments. The productions of the fifth, and immediately following centuries, were rather the feeble endeavours of an expiring, than the vigorous efforts of a new age. — W.

social education and the ultimate polish of man, nor can it appear during the rudeness of infant societies; and as among the western nations, the Italians were the first who extricated themselves from the bonds of barbarism and formed asylums for industry, art and science kept pace with the social progress, and produced their first legitimate essays among them.

How favourably religious enthusiasm operated on art, their sympathetic revolutions still farther prove; they flourished, they languished, they fell together. As zeal relented and public grandeur gave way to private splendour, the arts became the hirelings of vanity and wealth. Servile they roamed from place to place, ready to administer to the whims and wants of the best bidder. In this point of sight we can easily solve all the phenomena which occur in the history of art, — its rise, its fall, eclipse, and re-appearance in various places, with styles as different as various tastes.

The efficient cause, therefore, why higher art at present is sunk to such a state of inactivity and languor that it may be doubted whether it will exist much longer, is not a particular one, which private patronage, or the will of an individual, however great, can remove; but a general cause, founded on the bent, the manners, habits, modes of a nation, — and not of one nation alone, but of all who at present pretend to culture. Our age, when compared with former ages, has but little occasion for great works, and that is the reason why so few are produced.* The ambition, activity, and spirit of public life is shrunk to the minute detail of domestic arrangements — every thing that surrounds us, tends to show us in private, is become snug, less, narrow, pretty, insignificant. We are not, perhaps, the less happy on account of all this; but from such selfish trifling to expect a system of art built on grandeur, without a total revolution, would only be less presumptuous than insane.

What right have we to expect such a revolution in our favour? †

Let us advert for a moment to the enormous difference of

* Vel duo vel nemo — turpe et miserabile!

† It is to be hoped now that this revolution, if it have not already taken place, has, at all events, given substantial evidences of its approach. — W.

difficulty between forming and amending the taste of a public — between legislation and reform. Either task is that of genius. Both have adherents, disciples, champions; but persecution, derision, checks, will generally oppose the efforts of the latter, whilst submission, gratitude, encouragement, attend the smooth march of the former. No madness is so incurable as wilful perverseness; and when men can once, with Medea, declare that they know what is best, and approve of it, but must, or choose to follow the worst, perhaps a revolution worse to be dreaded than the disease itself, must precede the possibility of a cure. Though, as it has been observed, the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries granted to the artists little more than the attention due to ingenious craftsmen; they were, from the object of their occupations and the taste of their employers, the legitimate precursors of Michelangelo and Raphael, who did no more than raise their style to the sublimity and pathos of the subject. These trod with loftier gait and bolder strides, a path on which the former had sometimes stumbled, often crept, but always advanced. The public and the artist went hand in hand; but on what spot of Europe can the young artist of our day be placed to meet with circumstances equally favourable? Arm him, if you please, with the epic and dramatic powers of Michelangelo and Raphael, where are the religious and civic establishments, where the temples and halls open to receive, where the public prepared to call them forth, to stimulate, to reward them?

Idle complaints! I hear a thousand voices reply. You accuse the public of apathy for the arts, while public and private exhibitions tread on each other's heels, panorama opens on panorama, and the splendour of galleries dazzles the wearied eye, and the ear is stunned with the incessant stroke of the sculptor's hammer, and our temples narrowed by crowds of monuments shouldering each other to perpetuate the memory of statesmen who deluded, or of heroes who bled at a nation's call! Look round all Europe; revolve the page of history from Osymandyas* to Pericles, from Pericles to Constantine, and say what age, what race, stretched forth a stronger arm to raise the drooping genius of art? Is it the public's fault if encouragement is turned

* Amenophis II. or Memnon. — W.

into a job, and despatch and quantity have supplanted excellence and quality, as objects of the artist's emulation? — And do you think that accidental and temporary encouragement can invalidate charges founded on permanent causes? What blew up the art, will in its own surcease terminate its success. Art is not ephemeral. Religion and liberty had for ages prepared what religion and liberty were to establish among the ancients. The germ of the Olympian Jupiter, and the Minerva of Phidias, lay in the gods of Aegina, and that of Theseus, Hercules, and Alcibiades, in the blocks of Harmodius and Aristogiton.

If the revolution of a neighbouring nation emancipated the people from the yoke of superstition, it has perhaps precipitated them to irreligion. He who has no visible object of worship is indifferent about modes, and rites, and places; and unless some great civil provisional establishment replaces the means furnished by the former system, the arts of France, should they disdain to become the minions and handmaids of fashion, may soon find that the only public occupation left for them will be a representation of themselves, deploring their new-acquired advantages.* By a great establishment, I mean one that will employ the living artists, raise among them a spirit of emulation dignified by the objects of their occupation, and inspire the public with that spirit; not an ostentatious display of ancient and modern treasures of genius, accumulated by the hand of conquest or of rapine. To plunder the earth was a Roman principle, and it is not perhaps matter of lamentation that modern Rome, by a retaliation of her own principle, is made to pay the debt contracted with mankind.† But let none fondly

* This passage relates to a state of affairs in France, which has happily long since passed away; still the newly created gallery of Versailles has much the character of what Fuseli here, almost prophetically, deprecates: the endless series of French battles which now fill the halls of Louis XIV., are repeated representations of themselves; though not exactly in the sense Fuseli implies. — W.

† The works of art plundered by the French from the various cities of Europe occupied by them during the revolutionary war, were all returned after the restoration of the royal family. Rome, however, had long since paid the debt contracted with mankind, for her spoliations of nations. The foundation of Constantinople, and the establishment of the Exarchate, were a great blow to the magnificence of Rome, which

believe that the importation of Greek and Italian works of art is an importation of Greek and Italian genius, taste, establishments, and means of encouragement; without transplanting and disseminating these, the gorgeous accumulation of technic monuments in no more than a dead capital, and, instead of a benefit, a check on living art.

With regard to ourselves, the barbarous, though then perhaps useful rage of image-breakers in the seventeenth century, seems much too gratuitously propagated as a principle in an age much more likely to suffer from irreligion than superstition.* A public body, inflamed by superstition, suffers, but it suffers from the ebullitions of radical heat, and may return to a state of health and life; whilst a public body, plunged into irreligion, is in a state of palsied apathy, the cadaverous symptom of approaching dissolution. Perhaps neither of these two extremes may be precisely our own state; we probably float between both. But surely in an age of inquiry and individual liberty of *thought*, when there are almost as many sects as heads, there was little danger that the admission of art to places of devotion could ever be attended by the errors of idolatry; nor have the motives which resisted the offer of ornamenting our churches perhaps any eminent degree of ecclesiastic or political sagacity to recommend them.† Who would not rejoice if the charm of our art, displaying the actions and example of the sacred founder of our religion and of his disciples in temples and conventicles, contributed to enlighten the zeal, stimulate the feelings, sweeten the acrimony, or dignify the enthusiasm of their respective audiences? The source of the grand monumental style of Greece was religion with liberty. At that period the artist, as Pliny expresses himself, was the property of the public, or, in other words, he considered himself as responsible for the influence of his works on public principle:

suffered still more devastating spoliation from the successive rulers of Constantinople and the Gothic plunderers of Italy, than any, perhaps, that it had inflicted on the ill-fated capitals of the Greeks. — W.

* Fuseli alludes to the republican Puritans: this was, however, scarcely the iconoclastic age of this country; for this we must look a century back, to the reign of Edward VI. and the regency of Somerset. — W.

† See note to Opie's third Lecture. — W.

with the decline of religion and liberty his importance and the art declined; and though the Egyptian custom of embalming the dead and suffering the living to linger had not yet been adopted, from the organ of the public he became the tool of private patronage; and private patronage, however commendable or liberal, can no more supply the want of general encouragement than the conservatories and hotbeds of the rich, the want of a fertile soil or genial climate. Luxury in times of taste keeps up execution in proportion as it saps the dignity and moral principle of the art; gold is the motive of its exertions, and nothing that ennobles man was ever produced by gold. When Nero transported the Pontic Apollo to the Golden House, and furnished the colossal shoulders of the god with his own head, sculpture lent her hand to legitimate the sacrilege*: why should painting be supposed to have been more squeamish when applied to decorate the apartments of his pleasures and the cabinet of Poppæa with Milesian pollutions, or the attitudes of Elephantis?

The effect of honours and rewards has been insisted on as a necessary incentive to artists: they ought, indeed, to be, they sometimes are, the result of superior powers; but accidental or partial honours cannot create genius, nor private profusion supply public neglect. No genuine work of art ever was or ever can be produced, but for its own sake; if the artist do not conceive to please himself, he never will finish to please the world. Can we persuade ourselves that all the treasures of the globe could suddenly produce an Iliad or Paradise Lost, or the Jupiter of Phidias, or the Capella Sistina? Circumstances may assist or retard parts, but cannot make them: they are the winds that now blow out a light, now animate a spark to conflagration. Nature herself has set her barriers between age and age, between genius and genius, which no mortal overleaps; all attempts to raise

* What Pontic Apollo? The colossal statue placed by Nero before the Golden House, and near the Colosseum, in front of the Temple of Rome and Venus, was a bronze figure of himself, 110 feet high, dedicated to the Sun. It was the work of Zenodorus. The only statue that could be called the Pontic Apollo is a statue of the god brought by Lucullus from Apollonia in Pontus, and dedicated in the capitol at Rome. Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* xxxiv. 7. 18. — W.

to perfection at once, what can only be reared by a succession of epochs, must prove abortive and nugatory: the very proposals of premiums, honours, and rewards to excite talent or rouse genius, prove of themselves that the age is unfavourable to art; for, had it the patronage of the public, how could it want them?

We have now been in possession of an Academy more than half a century; all the intrinsic means of forming a style alternate at our commands; professional instruction has never ceased to direct the student; premiums are distributed to rear talent and stimulate emulation, and stipends are granted to relieve the wants of genius and finish education. And what is the result? If we apply to our Exhibition, what does it present, in the aggregate, but a gorgeous display of varied powers, condemned, if not to the beasts, at least to the dictates of fashion and vanity? What, therefore, can be urged against the conclusion, that, as far as the public is concerned, the art is sinking, and threatens to sink still deeper, from the want of demand for great and significant works? Florence, Bologna, Venice, each singly taken, produced, in the course of the sixteenth century alone, more great historic pictures than all Britain taken together, from its earliest attempts at painting to its present efforts. What are we to conclude from this? that the soil from which Shakspeare and Milton sprang is unfit to rear the genius of poetic art? or find the cause of this seeming impotence in that general change of habits, customs, pursuits, and amusements, which for near a century has stamped the national character of Europe with apathy or discountenance of the genuine principles of art?

But if the severity of these observations, this denudation of our present state moderates our hopes, it ought to invigorate our efforts for the ultimate preservation, and, if immediate restoration be hopeless, the gradual recovery of art. To raise the arts to a conspicuous height may not perhaps be in our power; we shall have deserved well of posterity if we succeed in stemming their farther downfall, if we fix them on the solid base of principle. If it be out of our power to furnish the student's activity with adequate practice, we may contribute to form his theory; and criticism founded on experiment, instructed by comparison, in posses-

sion of the labours of every epoch of art, may spread the genuine elements of taste, and check the present torrent of affectation and insipidity.

This is the real use of our institution, if we may judge from analogy. Soon after the middle of the sixteenth century, when the gradual evanescence of the great luminaries in art began to alarm the public, an idea started at Florence of uniting the most eminent artists into a society, under the immediate patronage of the Grand Duke, and the title of Academy: it had something of a conventual air, has even now its own chapel, and celebrates an annual festival with appropriate ceremonies; less designed to promote than to prevent the gradual debasement of art.* Similar associations in other places were formed in imitation, and at the time of the Carracci even the private schools of painters adopted the same name. All, whether public or private, supported by patronage or individual contribution, were and are symptoms of art in distress, monuments of public dereliction and decay of taste. But they are at the same time the asylum of the student, the theatre of his exercises, the repositories of the materials, the archives of the documents of our art, whose principles their officers are bound now to maintain, and for the preservation of which they are responsible to posterity, undebauched by the flattery, heedless of the sneers, undismayed by the frown of their own time.

Permit me to part with one final observation. Reynolds has told us, and from *him* whose genius was crowned with the most brilliant success during his life, from him it came with unexampled magnanimity, "that those who court the applause of their own time must reckon on the neglect of posterity." On this I shall not insist as a general maxim; all depends on the character of the time in which an artist lives, and on the motive of his exertions. Michelangelo, Raphael, Titian, and Vasari, Giuseppe d'Arpino, and Luca Giordano, enjoyed equal celebrity during their own times. The three first enjoy it now, the three last are forgotten or censured. What are we to infer from this unequal verdict of posterity? What, but what Cicero says, that time obliterates the conceits of opinion or fashion, and establishes the verdicts of nature? The age of Julio and Leone demanded

* See Introductory Essay, p. 3—5. — W.

genius for its own sake, and found it—the age of Cosmo, Ferdinand, and Urban, demanded talents and despatch to flatter their own vanity, and found them too; but Cosmo, Ferdinand, and Urban, are sunk in the same oblivion, or involved in the same censure with their tools—Julio and Leone continue to live with the permanent powers which they had called forth.

INDEX.

A.

Abraham, 57. 73.
Achilles Tatius, 342.
Addison, 549.
Ælian, 342. 413.
Agalaphon, 356.
Agatharcus, 203.
Agesander, 376.
Albano, 244. 397.
Aldegrever, 400.
Alexander the Great, 77.
Alfani, Orazio di Paris, 7.
Algardi, 194.
Allan, Sir William, 26.
Allegri, Antonio, 302.
Altorfer, Albrecht, 399.
Amerigi, Michelangelo, 391.
Amman, Jost, 403.
Anaxagoras, 203.
Angelo. *See* Michelangelo.
Antignano, Segna, 5.
Antonio, Mark, 135.
Apelles, 2. 85. 96. 164. 278. 300. 315. 338. 448.
Apollodorus, 352. 448. 517.
Aquinas, 160.
Archimedes, 463.
Aretusi, 484.
Ariosto, 541.
Aristides, 372.
Aristippus, 463.
Aristolaus, 361.
Aristotle, 211. 277. 355 463.
Ashfield, W., 25.
Athenæus, 342.
Audran, 149.
Augustus II., 14.

B.

Baccio, 533.
Bacon, Lord, 96. 290.
Baglione, 6.
Baker, John, 24.
Baldinucci, 5.
Balechon, 150.
Bandinelli, Baccio, 416. 429. 497
Barbarelli, Giorgione, 483.
Barbieri, Francesco, 397.
Barocci, 133.
Barrett, George, 24.
Barry, James, 24. 40, 41. 293.
Bartolomeo, Fra, 85. 127. 224.
Bartolozzi, Francesco, 24.
Bassano, 230.
Bedford, Earl of, 274.
Beheim, Sebald, 400.
Bellini, Gian. 324.
Bellini, Jacopo, 2.
Bembo, 427. 541.
Benvenuto. *See* Cellini.
Berchem, 110. 219.
Berettini, Pietro, 481.
Berkeley, 209.
Bermudez, Cean, 10.
Bernini, Gio., 196.
Berruguette, Alfonso, 405.
Bigio, Francia, 533.

Bolognini, 6.
Bonaventura, St. 160.
Bonifacio, 484.
Boos, Roman, 11.
Borghese, Don Paolo, 224.
Borghini, Vincenzio, 5.
Borgia, Cæsar, 448.
Borromeo, Cardinal, 6.
Bos, Abbé du, 290.
Bourdon, Sebastien, 404.
Brunelleschi, 123. 378.
Buonainti, Corsino, 5.
Burch, Edward, 24.
Burke, Edmund, 22. 41.

C.

Cador, Titiano da, 324.
Cagliari, Paolo, 458. 484. 520.
Caldara, Polidoro, 534.
Camper, 526.
Caravaggio, 86. 183. 389. 483. 517.
Cardan, Jerome, 525.
Carlini, Agostino, 24.
Carpi, Ugo, 135.
Carracci, The, 45. 86. 124. 142. 227. 305. 396. 549.
Carracci, Agostino, 142. 395. 474. 487. 518. 548.
Carracci, Annibal, 142. 222. 250. 314. 397. 520. 548.
Carracci, Lodovico, 6. 86. 141. 155. 396. 516. 518. 548.
Cars, 149.
Casentino, Jacopo di, 5.
Castelfranco, Giorgione del, 301.
Castiglione, Count, 543.
Catena, Vincenzio, 3.
Catharine II., 14.
Catton, Charles, 24.
Cavallo, Monte, 11.
Cellini, Benvenuto, 406. 415.
Cenni, Pasquino, 5.
Cesari, Giuseppe, 482. 534.
Ceuto, Guercino, 309.
Chamberlin, Mason, 24.
Chambers, Sir William, 21. 24.
Charlemont, Earl of, 26.
Charles I., 14.
Charles III., 10.
Charles VI., 13.
Chatelin, 150.
Chesterfield, Earl of, 26.
Cicero, 160. 278. 341. 559.
Cignani, 123.
Cimabue, 5. 83. 123. 206. 259.
Cinnuzzi, Vanni, 5.
Cipriani, 16. 24.
Claude, 110. 449.
Clement VII., 433.
Clement XI., 7.
Colbert, 8.
Colotes, 356.
Columbo, 408.
Conca, Sebastian, 405.
Condivi, Ascanio, 261. 342. 416.
Congreve, 549.
Corenzio, Belisario, 487.
Coreggio, 86. 137. 142. 167. 182. 228. 260. 283. 302. 385. 446. 461. 489. 511. 546.
Cortona. *See* Berettini.
Cortona, Pietro da, 123. 156. 222. 398.
Cosmo I., Duke, 5.
Cosway, Richard, 24.
Cotes, 21. 24.
Couston, 195.
Crichton, the Admirable, 259.

D.

Daddi, Bernardo, 5.
Dalton, 21.
Damascenus, John, 4.
Dance, Nathaniel, 24.
Dance, George, 24.
Dante, 417. 427.
D'Arpino, Cavaliere, 86. 559.
Da Vinci. *See* Vinci.
Dell' Abate, 390. 406.
Del Sarto. *See* Sarto.
Demetrius, 277.
Democritus, 203. 463.
Denner, 39.
De Piles, 344. 525.
Diepenbeck, Abraham, 402.

Dietrich, 39.
Diogenes, 463.
Dionysius, 92. 277.
Domenichino, 45. 124. 155. 471. 475.
Donato, 378.
Dow, Gherard, 507.
Dryden, 256. 323. 549.
Dürer, Albert, 96. 182. 261. 337. 399. 403. 496. 525.
Du Sart, 121.

E.

Eberhard, Conrad, 11.
Edelinck, 149.
Edwards, 16. 21.
Elsheimer, 449.
Epictetus, 463.
Epicurus, 160.
Errard, C., 8.
Erynna, 340.
Euphorbus, 341.
Euphranor, 299. 375.
Eupompus, 1. 370. 498.
Evenor, 356.
Eyck, John van, 14.

F.

Falconet, 193.
Feichtmayr, F. X., 11.
Felibieu, 344.
Ferdinand of Aragon, 10.
Ferdinand VI., 10.
Ferri, Ciro, 175.
Fiorillo, 13.
Flaxman, 40.
Franciabigio, 497.
Francis I., 390.
Francis II., 13.
Franco, Giorgione, 385.
Frederic I., 12.
Frederic William I., 12.
Frederic the Great, 12.
Fresnoy, 323. 344. 525.
Frey, 149.
Fuseli, Henry, 49.

G.

Gainsborough, Thomas, 24. 294.
Garrick, 448.
George III., 23.
Gerbier, Sir Balthazar, 15.
Gherardi, Consiglio, 5.
Ghiberti, Lorenzo, 11. 123. 197. 378.
Ghisiglieri, Count, 6.
Giordano, Luca, 398. 405. 559.
Giorgione, 127. 182. 207. 214. 224. 283. 302. 485. 537. 545.
Giotto, 123.
Giovanni, Tommaso, 378.
Girardon, 148.
Giulio. *See* Romano.
Goldsmith, Dr., 31.
Golzius, 388. 403. 548.
Gonzaga, 427.
Grotius, 448.
Guido, 222. 244. 278. 309. 397.
Gusci, Lapo, 5.
Gwynn, John, 24.

H.

Halifax, Lord, 15.
Haydon, 23.
Hayman, 18. 24.
Hegemon, 93.
Heinitz, Baron, 12.
Hemskerk, 388. 548.
Hercules, 107.
Heynz, 401.
Hoare, William, 24.
Hogarth, 17. 161. 293.
Holbein, 97. 182. 403. 406. 431.
Homer, 71. 408.
Hone, Nathaniel, 24.
Horace, 172. 283.
Hortensius, 341.
Howard, 24.
Hudson, 25.
Hunter, Dr., 24.
Hyde, Peter, 17.

J.

James II., 274.
Jerome, St., 160.
Johnson, Dr., 22. 443.
Jonson, Ben, 549.
Jordaens, 230.
Joseph I., 13.
Julius II., 420.

K.

Kaufmann, Angelica, 24.
Kingston, Sir Francis, 15.
Kirby, 18.
Kneller, Sir Godfrey, 15.
Krahe, J. L., 12.

L.

Laban, 58.
Lairesse, Gherard, 337. 502.
Lambert, 18,
Lanfranco, 123. 175. 397. 462.
Langer, Peter von, 11.
Langer, Robert von, 11.
Lanzi, 485. 536.
Laurent, Andrè, 150.
Lavater, 49. 525.
Le Brun, 8. 404. 430.
Lely, Sir Peter, 406.
Le Moin, 123.
Lenoir, 34.
Leo X., 425.
Leonardo. *See* Vinci.
Leopoldo, Duke, 5.
Le Pautre, 195.
Liberi, Pietro,
Lipsius, 448.
Lomazzo, 525.
Longinus, 299.
Lorrain, Claude, 334.
Louis XIII., 8.
Louis XIV., 8.
Louis XV., 9.
Lovino, 127.
Lucas, Jacobze, 400.
Lucian, 164. 342. 409.
Lucretius, 202.
Luke, St., 4.
Luini, 484.
Lysippus, 80. 277. 340. 498.

M.

Machiavelli, 448.
Malbranche, 209.
Malvasia, 6. 343.
Manni, D. M., 4.
Mantegna, Andrea, 2. 259. 378. 496.
Mantuano, Giorgio, 400.
Maratta, Carlo, 482. 534.
Marsigli, Count, 7.
Masaccio, 124. 259. 378. 533.
Matire, Pietro, 545.
Maximilian, Joseph I., 11.
Mazzi, Pietro, 128.
Medici, de Juliano, 433.
Mengs, 39. 223. 303. 344. 405. 534.
Metrodorus, 338.
Meursius, 448.
Meusel, 11.
Meyer, Jeremiah, 24.
Mezentius, 107.
Michelangelo, 45. 85. 124. 139. 259. 261. 263. 283. 308. 382. 389. 416. 461. 510. 533. 540. 559.
Mignard, Pierre, 404.
Milton, 210. 279. 290. 419. 549.
Mitchell, Sir Andrew, 49.
Mola, Francis, 403. 449.
Moro, Duke Ludovico, 6.
Moser, G. M., 20. 24.
Moser, Mary, 24.
Mühlbach, von Karl zu, 11.
Mundinus, 129.
Murer, Christopher, 403.
Murillo, 405.
Muziano, Girolamo, 5.

N.

Napoleon, 8.
Newton, Sir Isaac, 290. 408.
Newton, F. M., 18. 20. 24.

Nicias, 300. 339. 524.
Nicocharis, 93.
Nilson, J. E., 11.
Ninus, 58.
Noah, 73.
Nollekens, Joseph, 24.
Northcote, 21.
Nutzel, Joachim, 11.

O.

Opie, John, 46.
Orpheus, 71.
Otway, 549.
Ovid, 317.

P.

Pamphilus, 1. 15. 338.
Panænus, 356.
Panson, 92.
Paolina, Cappella, 547.
Paris, 341.
Parmigiano, 45. 86. 139. 394. 547.
Parrhasius, 77. 85. 99. 160. 300. 315. 338. 352. 359. 493. 534.
Pasinelli, L., 6.
Passavant, Johann, 13.
Paul Veronese. *See* Veronese.
Paul III., 420.
Pausanias, 338. 341. 354.
Pausius, 353.
Pellegrino. *See* Tifaldi.
Penni, Gio Francesco, 134.
Penny, Edward, 20. 24.
Pentz, George, 400.
Pericles, 77.
Perugino, Pietro, 426. 513.
Pescia, Pier da Maria, 433.
Phidias, 77. 115. 277. 338.
Philip II., 388.
Philip III., 9.
Philip V., 9.
Philippe, Louis, 33.
Philostratus, 299. 341.
Pindar, 410.
Piombo, Sebastian del, 315. 389. 454.
Pipi, Giulio, 482.
Plato, 463.
Pliny, 2. 300. 338. 362. 494. 523.
Plutarch, 2.
Polidori. *See* Caravaggio.
Polidoro, 482.
Pollux, 342.
Polycletus, 122. 338.
Polygnotus, 92. 299. 340. 354. 551.
Polyphemus, 107.
Ponte, Jacopo, 534.
Pontius, 149. 219.
Pontormo, Jacopo da, 400, 533.
Porta, S. Marco di, 381. 481. 533.
Poussins, The, 100. 155. 161. 164. 247. 314. 373. 391. 430. 449. 451.
Praxiteles, 338. 524.
Primaticcio, Francesco, 390. 405.
Proclus, 277.
Propertius, 316.
Protesilaus, 341.
Protogenes, 278. 339. 353.
Pucci, Domenico, 5.
Puget, 148. 194.
Pythagoras, 71. 463.

Q.

Quintilian, 356. 362.

R.

Rachel, 58.
Racine, 549.
Ramsay, Allan, 25.
Raphael, 45. 86. 98. 124 130. 155. 157. 162. 222. 247. 261. 266. 281. 285. 373. 383. 428. 448. 455. 510. 542. 559.
Rembrandt, 121. 183. 230. 260. 283. 311. 401. 449. 472. 496. 521.
Reynolds, Sir Joshua, 20. 24. 40. 47. 250. 261. 276. 281 314. 453. 544. 559.
Ribera, Joseph, 405.
Ricciarelli, 388.

Richards, John, 24
Richardson, 294.
Richmond, Duke of, 16.
Ridolfi, 343.
Ringgli, Gotthard, 403.
Ripa, Cesare, 164.
Robusti, Jacopo, 487.
Romano, Giulio, 134. 222. 472. 534.
Romney, 25.
Rosa, Salvator, 392. 449.
Rosso, 405.
Rowe, Nicholas. 549.
Rubens, 128 161. 215. 229. 254. 283. 331. 401. 406. 429. 447. 521.
Rustici, 405.

S.

Sacchi, Andrea, 517. 534.
Salai, 127.
Salvator. *See* Rosa.
Sandby, Paul, 20. 24.
Sandby, Thomas, 24.
Sappho, 340.
Sarto, Andrea del, 133, 400. 481. 517. 533.
Savonarola, 427.
Schadow, J. G., 12.
Schadow, F. W. von, 12.
Schidone, Bartho., 397.
Schön, Martin, 399.
Scott, Samuel, 25.
Sebastiano, Fra, 225. 388.
Semiramis, 57.
Serres, Dominick, 24.
Shakspere, 281. 413. 432. 549.
Shee, Sir M. A., 23.
Signorelli, Luca, 259. 379.
Simonides, 407.
Socrates, 76. 99. 463.
Solon, 71.
Spagnuoletto, 405.
Spenser, 163.
Spranger, 388. 548.
Squarcione, Francesco, 2.
Städel, Johann, 13.
Steen, Jan, 516.
Sterne, 448.
Stetten, Paul von, 11.
Stimmer, Tobias, 403.
Strange, Sir Robert, 20.
Sueur, Eustache, 404. 469.
Sulzer, 49.
Suvée, 8.
Swanevelt, 110.

T.

Taruffi, E., 6.
Tatian, 342.
Terrick, Dr., 42.
Testa, Pietro, 392. 502.
Thales, 71.
Theodor, Elector Carl, 12.
Theresa, Empress Maria, 13.
Thornill, Sir James, 15.
Tibaldi, Pellegrino, 45. 388. 400. 405. 547.
Tiepolo, Gio. 225.
Timanthes, 362.
Tintoretto, 226. 329. 401. 429. 486. 521. 534.
Tiraboschi, 4.
Titian, 47. 86. 133. 137. 142. 167. 182. 214. 224. 283. 324. 385. 448. 486. 508. 519. 534. 545. 559.
Torregiano, 406.
Tours, Peter, 24.
Trevigi, Girolamo da, 493.
Tulden, Theodore, 390.
Tyler, J. 24.

U.

Udine, Girolamo da, 135.
Urban VII., 6.

V.

Vandyck, 52. 177. 215. 230 402. 448. 472.
Valle, Della, 3.
Vanloo, 150.
Vannucchi, 387.
Varin, Quintin, 391.

Vasari, 5. 134. 224. 342. 416. 481.
Vecelli, Titiano. *See* Titian.
493. 536. 559.
Veen, Otho van, 401.
Vega, Pierino del, 493. 534.
Veit, Philip, 13.
Velasquez, Diego, 405.
Venius, Otto, 164. 331.
Vergara, Joseph and Ignacio, 10.
Verio, 406.
Verocchio, Andrea, 259.
Veronese, Paul, 226. 329. 401.
447. 521. 534.
Vespucci, Amerigo, 408.
Vinci, Leonardo, 6. 85. 124. 129.
154. 224. 259. 337. 380. 480.
525. 532. 535.
Virgil, 462.
Vischer, Peter, 11. 219.
Vite, Timoteo della, 484.
Vitruvius, 203. 523.
Vivares, 150.
Vorsterman, 149.

W.

Waagen, Dr., 38.
Wale, Samuel, 24.
Walpole, Horace, 15.
Watelet, 525.
Watteau, 161. 219.
West, Benjamin, 20. 24.
Wilson, Richard, 20. 24. 293. 449.
Wilton, Joseph, 20. 24.
Winckelmann, 290. 344. 525.
Wink, Christian, 11.
Wolcot, Dr., 47.
Wolgemuth, Michael, 399.
Wouverman, 219.

X.

Xenophon, 98.

Y.

Yeo, Richard, 24.

Z.

Zampieri, Domenico, 397.
Zanetti, 3.
Zeuxis, 257. 278. 299. 315. 339
352. 359. 409. 498.
Zoffani, Johan, 24.
Zoppo, Marco, 2.
Zuccari, 482.
Zuccavelli, Francesco, 24.
Zucchero, Federigo, 6. 406.

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